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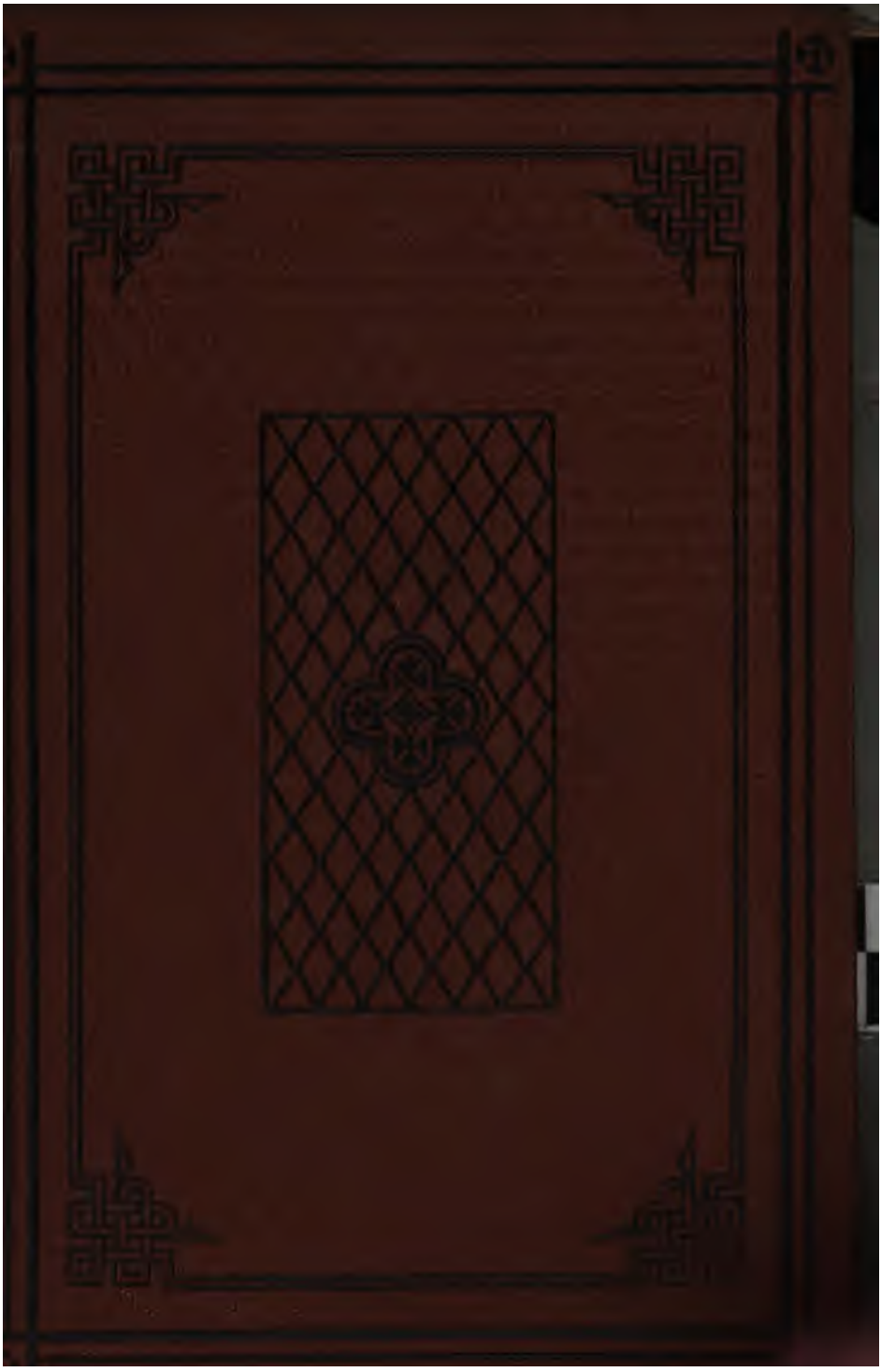

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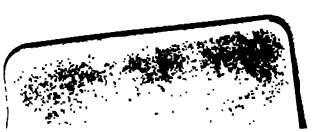

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THE

IMPENDING SWORD.

A Novel.

BY

EDMUND YATES,

AUTHOR OF 'BLACK SHEEP,' 'THE ROCK AHEAD,' 'THE YELLOW FLAG,' ETC. ETC.

'Put we our quarrel to the will of Heaven,
Who, when He sees the hours ripe on earth,
Will rain hot vengeance on the offenders' heads.'

SHAKESPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 8 CATHERINE ST. STRAND.
1874.

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CONTENTS OF VOL. III.

Book the Third.

THE DISCOVERY.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	CONSULTATION	1
II.	RECOGNISED	40
III.	A WAY OF ESCAPE	73
IV.	ESCAPED	109
V.	A CLUE	146
VI.	HARKING-BACK	181
VII.	MR. DUNN	208
VIII.	IDENTIFIED	242
	EPILOGUE	256
	A NOTE BY THE AUTHOR	272

Book the Third.

THE DISCOVERY.

CHAPTER I.

CONSULTATION.

THORNTON CAREY stood as one transfixed; in all his recollection of Helen he had never seen her like this before—wonderfully pretty, but deadly white, and almost rigid.

'You wish to see me,' she said, advancing towards him, and placing her cold hand in his; 'you have bad tidings, and you hesitate to tell me; you need not be afraid—directly your arrival was announced I had a presentiment.'

'I have, indeed, something very serious to say to you,' said Thornton Carey, motioning her to a seat, 'and you judge me truly when you say that I find it difficult to break it to you.'

'What you have to tell me concerns Alston—concerns my husband,' said Helen, with unnatural calmness; 'don't fear to speak it at once—he is ill—he is dead!'

'Helen,' said Thornton Carey, laying his hand softly on hers, 'I have known you from your earliest youth, and no brother could have a deeper interest in or affection for you than I have. It is my lot to bring you the news of the most serious trial that you could be put to, and I must not shrink from the obligation. So long as there was any hope, I kept silence myself, and enjoined it on others. Now there is none, and in mercy to you, as well as in justice to myself, I must speak. Summon your womanly fortitude to your aid, my poor child, for you will need it all. Helen—your husband is dead!'

She sunk back in her chair, closing her eyes, and pressing her hands before her face. From time to time a strong shiver shook her entire frame, and her interlaced fingers were convulsively twisted together. Once or

twice, too, she uttered a deep groan, but there were no tears, nor any of the usual signs of grief.

After a few moments, still lying back, and with her face still covered by her hands, she asked, in a voice such as Thornton Carey had never heard from her before—dull, toneless, and metallic: 'Did he die in England?'

'He did,' replied Carey. 'Ah, Helen, I have not told you all even yet—you have much to hear and bear.'

'You can proceed,' she said. 'You see that I am perfectly quiet.'

Thornton Carey glanced at her uneasily; his good sense told him that this forced calmness was unnatural, and might be dangerous, and yet, now that he had once entered upon his mission, he could not hesitate to go through with it.

'There is reason to believe,' he said, half averting his head, for, though her eyes were covered by her hands, he felt as though her gaze was directed towards him, 'there is

reason to believe that poor Griswold was the victim of foul play—that he met his death unfairly—' he saw that she failed to perceive his meaning, and added slowly—' that he was murdered!'

'O my God!' she cried; and with a piercing shriek she threw herself forward on the table, burying her head in her arms, which were enshrouded in her loose hair.

Thornton Carey sprang to his feet, and hastened to fetch her some iced-water from the pitcher which stood on the buffet. When he returned with the tumbler, she was sobbing fearfully, and rocking herself to and fro, moaning dismally the while.

'O, my Alston, my darling, my own husband—O, why did you leave me? Why did you not listen to me when I implored you not to go this fatal journey?'

'Helen,' said Thornton Carey, touching her lightly on the shoulder, 'where is the courage you promised to show me?'

'O, to think that he is dead! that I shall

never see him again! O, my own darling, my own Alston—to think that he has been killed!'

'You are right to mourn him,' said Carey gently, 'for he was the best, the kindest, the most generous of men.'

'O, who could speak of that so well as I could?' murmured Helen, her face still covered. 'Did he not give me everything I wanted? Was it not for my sake that he took this journey in which he lost his life?'

'Recollect then, Helen, that, however much you may deplore his loss, there is yet another duty owing to his memory. If my suspicions are correct, he was treacherously and basely murdered, and our first duty is to avenge his death, and bring the murderer to justice.'

He had scarcely uttered the words before she raised her head and confronted him, with difficulty recognisable as the woman who, pale and shrinking, had so recently entered the boudoir; her eyes blazed with a fierce,

lurid light, her cheeks flushed and tear-blurred, and her lips tightly set together.

'You are right, Thornton Carey,' she said very quietly; 'that is, of course, the first thing to be done. Who are these wretches? Are they known?'

'Not yet,' said Carey; 'but I hope they will be before long. I will leave you now; some other day—to-morrow, perhaps—when you are more calm, I will tell you the particulars of this dreadful affair, and we will consult as to what is to be done.'

'To-morrow,' she repeated; 'why not now? Why lose one moment? Is calmness required when the means of punishing my Alston's murderer is in question? For God's sake, talk to me, Thornton Carey, and give me something to employ my mind, for when I think of his loss and my own desolate position, I feel as if I should go mad.'

An instant's rapid reflection convinced Carey that to do as she requested would be the best means of serving her—the best

chance of staving off that access of grief which he had so much dreaded.

'I will do what you wish, Helen,' he said, after a pause, 'if you will promise me to keep guard over yourself, and to strive hard against being betrayed into any exhibition of feeling; this will be the more necessary as I shall have to bring two strangers to you, people who made the acquaintance of our poor Alston in England, and who were the first to form the idea that he was indeed the murdered man.'

'To form the idea!' cried Helen. 'Is it not certain—is there any possible doubt?'

'None,' said Carey gently, but decisively. 'From all that I can make out, and you will understand that I have done my best to sift the matter thoroughly, I can have no doubt that the American gentleman passing under the name of Foster, whose murder in Liverpool is now reported in the newspapers, was your husband, and my poor friend, Alston Griswold.'

'Passing under the name of Foster!' repeated Helen. 'Alston would never have descended to such duplicity. What reason could he have,' she added, looking up, 'for concealing his real name?'

'That is more than I can say,' cried Carey; 'but whether he did or not you ought to be able to tell at once. How were your letters to him addressed?'

Helen's face fell, and her eyes were downcast; she did not like such an intimate friend even as Thornton Carey to know that her husband had not trusted her with his address. There was, however, no help for it, so she said:

'I did not write direct to Alston in England—my letters have been sent under cover to Mr. Warren, and have been forwarded by him.'

Carey was silent for a moment. Then he said:

'That intelligence goes far to confirm my worst fears. If Alston had not

been under an assumed name, you would have written to him direct; that he had an assumed name, which must have been known to Warren, proves that the disguise must have been for business purposes. It is as I thought at first,' he said, lifting up his hands; 'that his business operations might not be known he took the name of Foster; by some one interested in thwarting those business operations he has been killed.'

Helen bowed her head.

'All things seem to point to that, I confess,' she said; 'but Foster is not an uncommon American name—there are hundreds and thousands of Americans now in England on business. The circumstance of Alston having thought fit to conceal his identity is merely a coincidence, and if no personal description of the murdered man has arrived, you may yet be wrong.'

'Would to God I could think so,' said Thornton Carey; 'but after you have heard the story of the two persons from England

whom I spoke of, I am afraid even you will have to surrender that hope. I have brought them with me—will you see them?'

'No,' she said quickly, 'I cannot, not to-day, not for some time. You surely cannot consider it necessary?'

'Not if the matter is to be dropped,' he replied quietly; 'but if any action is to be taken upon it, if, finding we are right in our surmise, we are at once to take steps to discover and pursue the perpetrators of this dreadful act, then I think no time should be lost in our availing ourselves of all the aid and assistance we can command.'

'That has decided me,' said Helen. 'I will see them at once. Who are they?'

'I think you have seen them,' said Thornton Carey; 'at all events their names are well known to you—they are Mr. Bryan Duval and Miss Clara Montressor.'

'The actors?' cried Helen.

'Exactly,' said Thornton Carey. 'You recollect poor Alston's love for the drama

and its professors, and how he used to declare that the theatre was the only place in which he could forget the cares and troubles of business. He seems to have carried this idea over to England with him, and to have made the acquaintance of and become tolerably intimate with this lady and gentleman. It was after accompanying them to Liverpool, and seeing them start on their journey here, that the fatal attack was made upon him. They are, as I need scarcely tell you, highly-intelligent people, and with the kindliest feelings towards you; and as, from the manner in which they were mixed up with poor Griswold in England, their information and advice is highly valuable, I would you should see them at once.'

'I will do so,' said Helen; 'I will come down with you at once to the parlour, where I suppose they are.'

She went down-stairs, only pausing for an instant and trembling violently as she passed the door of the library, when the

remembrance flashed across her of her interview with Alston on the night of their ball, and of the manner in which, acting under the presentiment which would seem to have been carried out, she had implored him to give up the idea of this journey. Then, summoning all her courage to her aid, she opened the door, and followed by Thornton Carey, entered the parlour.

A lady, who was turning over the leaves of a photographic album, and a gentleman, who seemed to be reading some memoranda in a note-book, rose at their entrance. She bowed as Thornton Carey muttered hastily some formal words of introduction, and looked at them keenly. Months afterwards Helen remembered that, notwithstanding the acuteness of the mental agonies she was suffering, she could not help remarking the difference between the quietly-dressed, mild-mannered lady who sat before her and the shrieking heroine of the stage, between the sharp, shrewd, worldly-wise Bryan Duval

and the steeple-hatted, velvet-cloaked utterer of romantic rhapsodies.

Bryan Duval was the first to speak: 'Your friend Mr. Carey has an idea, Mrs. Griswold, that we may be able to be of some service to you by giving information which, combined with such knowledge as you yourself possess, may tend to elucidate the causes which prompted this dreadful deed, and enable you to recognise its perpetrator. I need scarcely assure you of our warm sympathy, or the earnest desire on our part to help you.'

Helen bowed, and steadying herself by a great mental effort, said: 'I am very grateful for the interest you have displayed towards me. Mr. Carey has given me no details, preferring that I should hear them all from you. I should like to know, in the first place, what gave you the idea of the identity of my husband, Mr. Griswold, with the victim of this cruel deed?'

'I think I can answer that question,'

said Miss Montressor, bending forward. 'The gentleman whom we knew as Mr. Foster once showed me a portrait of a lady which he described as his wife's. I had the portrait in my hands for some time, and its features were vividly impressed in my mind. Before we made our first appearance at the theatre here, I had heard accidentally that you were to occupy a certain seat, and I was instructed to look out for you. You may judge of my astonishment when in that seat I saw a lady whom I recognised as the original of the portrait which Mr. Foster had shown me.'

'You must pardon my appearing a little confused,' said poor Helen, putting her hand on her head. 'Do I understand that you recognise me as the original of the portrait shown to you?'

'Certainly,' replied Miss Montressor; 'there could be no doubt about it.'

'And this portrait,' asked Helen, 'what was it like—how was it set?'

'It was a miniature, a very beautifully coloured photograph, I should say, and it was set in the inside case of a plain gold watch, the spring which discovered it being very difficult to find.'

'That was my parting gift to Alston,' murmured Helen. 'Either he must have shown it to you or it must have been stolen from him.'

'That I think can easily be decided,' interrupted Bryan Duval, 'by a description of the gentleman whom we knew as Mr. Foster, and who showed the portrait to this lady. A man between five-and-thirty and forty years of age, about my height, with hair somewhat lighter than mine, a thick dark moustache and imperial, or chin tuft; his expression somewhat prematurely grave and thoughtful, but brightening in an instant whenever anything struck his fancy; his manner rather English than American, perhaps a little formal at first, but frank and warm when he was known—I beg your

pardon,' he added hurriedly, seeing that Helen had placed her handkerchief to her eyes, 'I fear I have said too much.'

'It was only for an instant,' she said, looking up. 'Your description, to my mind, is singularly accurate, and I fear that it would be useless to indulge in any further hope. It seems now only too certain that the worst is true.'

'What we have to do now, then,' said Thornton Carey, striking in quickly, and with a significant glance at Duval, 'is to try and discover what instigated the deed, and by whom it was perpetrated.'

'To aid us in that endeavour,' said Duval, who perfectly comprehended the reasons which actuated his companion, 'we must get Mrs. Griswold to answer as freely and as closely as she possibly can.'

'I will do so to the best of my ability,' said Helen; 'but I must warn you from the first that my knowledge of Mr. Griswold was mainly restricted to his home, where

he was the best, the truest, and the most generous of men. He had not, and I have no doubt correctly, a very high estimate of woman's value in business matters; he imagined that they could not grasp the details, and if, during the first days of our marriage, I ever attempted to talk of his affairs, he invariably put me off with a pleasant word and a jest. Seeing how he felt about the matter, I had long since given up attempting to speak to him concerning them.'

'But surely this voyage to Europe, which was not an ordinary business matter, but one entirely out of the way, might have tempted you to break your rule?' said Bryan Duval.

'It did,' said Helen. 'I spoke to Mr. Griswold about it on several occasions; the last I remember perfectly. There had been a little social gathering at this house, and after our friends had gone my husband went into his library, to arrange some

papers. I joined him there, and besought him to give up his intended voyage.'

'What a mercy it would have been if you had succeeded!' said Miss Montressor.

'I think I might have succeeded if he alone had been engaged in the undertaking, for he was much moved by my evident distress; but he told me that he was merely one of several; that certain of his friends had joined in the speculation on the strength of his having guaranteed to carry it out; and that it was impossible for him to back out of it with honour.'

'Certain of his friends,' repeated Bryan Duval slowly. 'Did he name any of them to you?'

'He did not,' replied Helen.

'This information gives colour to your idea, Mr. Carey,' continued Bryan, 'that the prompting of the deed may have come from this side of the water. You were acquainted with most of your husband's friends, I suppose, Mrs. Griswold?'

'In a casual way,' replied Helen. 'Mr. Griswold was of a very hospitable nature, and was in the habit of inviting them to dinners at Delmonico's or at this house, at most of which I was present, while they, in their turn, would invite us.'

'Now, among these acquaintances, can you think of any one who could be jealous of Mr. Griswold in any possible way, of his position in Wall-street, his social status, or —anything else?' asked Bryan Duval, looking narrowly at her.

'No,' answered Helen, whose cheeks flushed crimson as the remembrance of her last interview with Trenton Warren rose unbidden to her mind—'no, I think not.'

'It is useless to ask if he had any enemies; none of us, even the most insignificant, is without them; but had he any enemy, open and avowed—have you ever heard of any one whom he had crossed in business, or—in anything else, and who was likely to revenge himself upon him?'

'Never,' said Helen decisively; 'never.'

'And you are absolutely not aware of the existence of any motive likely to prompt such a crime?'

'I am not,' replied Helen.

Bryan Duval shrugged his shoulders, and sank back in his chair.

'Mr. Duval's questions have been very skilfully put, my dear Mrs. Griswold, and you have answered them plainly and conscientiously. I will ask you—'

'Pray excuse me one minute,' said Miss Montressor; 'there is one point in connection with the identity of Mr. Foster with Mr. Griswold which has not yet been brought forward. On the same evening on which your portrait had been shown to me,' she continued, turning to Helen, 'as we were driving to London in an open carriage, I complained of the cold, and Mr. Foster—I may as well continue to call him so—lent me this pin, which he took from his cravat, to secure my shawl—do you recognise it?'

As she spoke she handed the pin to Mrs. Griswold.

Helen looked at it attentively. 'I have seen this stone before, but I cannot tell where.' Then, after a pause, she said: 'Now I recollect perfectly. It was not set as a pin when I saw it, but as a sleeve link. I found it on the floor of the room after the little party which I have mentioned, and I do not remember having come across it since.'

'You are quite right,' said Miss Montressor. 'Mr. Foster mentioned having found the link when he unpacked his trunk on his arrival in England. He imagined it to be one of a set belonging to you, and had it mounted as a pin. The evidence is not worth much, I know,' continued Miss Montressor, taking the pin from Helen's hand, and laying it on the table, 'but it is a small additional proof that Mr. Griswold and the victim of this horrible crime were one. I am sorry I interrupted you, Mr. Carey.'

'Not at all,' replied Thornton. 'I was merely going to sum up all Mr. Duval's skilful questions in one commonplace one. Have you, my dear Mrs. Griswold, no idea of anything which could have tempted any one to assassinate your husband?'

'Not the slightest in the world,' said Helen, shaking her head wearily; 'unless, indeed, my poor Alston was mistaken for some one else. I think that must have been it. I think he must have been mistaken for some one else.'

'Mrs. Griswold is growing a little fatigued,' said Bryan Duval, who had been watching her closely, 'and naturally requires rest and quiet. I do not think that we can say any more just now, and we had better bring this painful interview to a close.'

'I agree with you,' said Thornton Carey; 'one word more and I have done. I had concluded,' he added, turning to Helen, 'even before what you told me this morning concerning your letters, that the man who

knew most about your poor husband's affairs, and who was most thoroughly in his confidence, was Trenton Warren. I have been to his office, and find that he is at Chicago. I have, accordingly, ventured to telegraph to him there in your name, desiring him to return at once, stating that it was of the utmost importance that you should see him, but not mentioning what has occurred. I hope I did rightly.'

'I—I suppose so,' Helen replied. 'But you will remain in town, Mr. Carey, and —this gentleman, and you, madam, will continue to advise me—will you not?'

'I may say, speaking for both of us, that we shall be too happy to be of any service to you,' said Bryan Duval. 'I have had some experience in the elucidation of mysteries, and I shall devote some time in the endeavour to bring this villany home to the proper person.'

'I would offer to stay with you,' said Miss Montressor, 'but, unfortunately, as you

are aware, my avocations do not permit me. I cannot bear to think of you sitting alone here, without any one to console you in your trouble.'

'You are very kind,' said Helen; 'but I feel that I have overtaxed my strength, and I shall get to bed as soon as possible. Fortunately, my child's nurse, Mrs. Jenkins'—here Miss Montressor winced—'is a most attentive and considerate person, and will, I am sure, take every care of me.'

'She seems, indeed, quite a treasure,' said Thornton Carey. 'I will call upon Dr. O'Connor as I go down town, and ask him to look in upon you when he is driving this way. You must be careful, my dear Mrs. Griswold; you will need all your strength to help us in the unravelment of this mystery.' Then they took their leave.

When they reached the street, Thornton Carey parted from them, with promises to see them on the morrow; and Bryan Duval, who seemed to have recovered all his old

manner, said to Miss Montressor: 'I am going down, my dear Clara, on a little mission to the Tombs, which is the cheerful name they give to the police office here. The judge is an old friend of mine, and I have already started inquiries among some of the police officers. It is not a place that I can conveniently take you to, so I advise you to get into the approaching omnibus, which these Americans, with their usual perversity, insist on calling a "stage," and which will put you down at the hotel. You will find the step very high, but woman is privileged in America, and you can seize the knee or the nose of the nearest gentleman, and help yourself in by it, without giving him any offence. You can add to the compliment, so soon as you are seated, by handing him this ten-cent bill, and observing his graceful attitudes as he pushes it through the hole in the roof to the driver. Adios, my child; I shall be back by dinner time.'

'Our Clara is a very nice little girl,'

said Bryan Duval, as he strolled down the street, 'and Mr. Thornton Carey is a worthy, good man—rather of the steady-going beef-and-potatoes kind of order, without any particular originality or fancy about him, and they both do their best, and very possibly be of use in helping to puzzle out the inquiry; but there are times when a man of any genius likes to be alone, and not to be yoked to any of his humdrum fellow creatures. Collaboration, working with another person, is a thing that I never appreciated —I mean working at the same time with another person. If a fellow has been before me with certain excellent crude notions, which he had brought to a certain point, and then gave them up because he lacked the ability to carry them further, and I take them up where he dropped them, and trundle them into a triumph, I do not call that collaboration; they become my ideas, and his failure becomes my success.

'This is a very singular case,' continued

Mr. Duval, taking from his pocket a small plaited-straw case of cigarettes, opening one, lighting it, and smoking it in the true Spanish fashion, 'a very singular case, and one which, properly manipulated, and placed on the boards with care, ought to bring me in something like a thousand pounds. I have no doubt there are men in London who are on to it already, who will make a wretched coarse bungle of the story, ascribing the cause of the murder to the usual motive, an improper lady, a horrible creature, with crimson cheeks and tow hair, and who will produce their garbage at the Surrey, where it will play for ten nights to overflowing galleries, and never be heard of afterwards. Now, let me see, if business continues well at the Varieties, I shall remain here till June; I can sketch out this story on the voyage home, and get it all ready for some London house to open with in September. Which manager shall I give it to? Wogsby, at the Parthenon, is too old;

wants to play the principal parts himself, and though he has the remains of greatness about him, cannot recollect his words. Rowley, at the Coliseum, can't get on without a show piece; he would want to put lions and tigers, elephants, camels, and spotted horses into this, and somehow, as the scene must be laid in Liverpool and thereabouts, that would spoil the local colour. Hodgkinson, of the Gravity, is, I think, my man. He is a true showman; French farces, show-leg and break-down burlesques, fine old English comedy and opéra bouffe, are all the same to Hodgkinson, so long as they draw the coppers, and I think I can make him see his way to this pretty clearly.

'I wonder if we are on the right scent or not? Carey's notion that the crime may have arisen from some business complication is not a bad one, and I took care immediately to adopt it as my own—there is never any use in losing the credit of these things. Whether he is right or not

remains to be proved. Of course, in a dramatic version, one would have to give another motive; business is a deuced unromantic thing, and no audience could feel any sympathy for a man who was knocked on the head by some one who had projected an opposition gas-works or a rival railway line. On the stage, the woman interest must be brought out, and that is easy enough to do, only just now one has pure prose to deal with, and I should much like to know the truth of the case. Union-square, by Jove! How quickly I must have walked. I think the faintest suspicion of a lunch would recruit exhausted nature before I plunge into the dirt and desolation of the Tombs.'

As he said these words, Mr. Duval turned down Fourteenth-street, and walked into Delmonico's. He was received by the two clerks, who sat at the counter facing the door, with a grave bow, which he gravely returned; then he entered the

public room, took up his position at a table in a window, and speedily found one of the sable-clad managers by his side.

'Delighted to see you again amongst us, M. Duval,' said this functionary, speaking in French. 'Every night this saloon is filled with ladies and gentlemen who, during their supper, *raffolent* of you and your success. You were here the other night yourself, I understand, but I had not the pleasure of seeing you.'

Thanks, my dear M. Adolphe,' replied Bryan, in the same language. 'These good New Yorkers are always kind to one who has happened once to please them, and I may truly say that they never forget old friends. And you are looking as young as ever; the cares of business sit lightly on your shoulders, *mon brave*,' and he tapped the little Frenchman lightly on the back. 'Say, Adolphe, is the brand of Chablis as good as ever?'

'I think I may say better, M. Duval.

We have some now which is—' And the little man, instead of finishing his sentence, kissed the fingers of his right hand and waved them in the air.

'Very well then, Adolphe, send me half a bottle of it and a dozen Blue Points. I am keeping to small oysters just now, for I am not yet acclimatised to the American monsters, and come back here yourself when you have ordered them, for I want to have a few words with you.'

The oysters were perfectly served, and the Chablis was delicious. After Mr. Duval had smacked his lips over his first glass of wine, he turned to M. Adolphe, who stood with a pleased look by his side, and said: 'Adolphe, you know me of old, and you can be sure that all you say to me will be treated with perfect confidence.'

M. Adolphe bowed.

'You know Mr. Griswold, I suppose?'

'Why, certainly. He has now gone to Europe, but when he is at home there is

scarcely a day that Mr. Griswold is not here.'

'Dines here by himself?'

'Dines and breakfasts here by himself, and with madame, and with his friends. There are few of our customers whose bills are so long as Mr. Griswold's, fewer still, alas, who are so prompt in paying them.'

'Exactly. Now,' continued Mr. Duval, 'I know the excellent rules of this house, that no one, however well known to the proprietor, is permitted to be served with a meal in a private room alone with a lady, even though there is no possible doubt that that lady is his wife; but I know also that, of course, there are various jolly supper-parties given up-stairs, at which all sorts of people are present. Was Mr. Griswold a frequent attendant of any of these?'

'Never,' said M. Adolphe energetically, 'I am perfectly prepared to say never. The people with whom Mr. Griswold consorted,

male and female, were always *les gens comme il faut.*'

'So I should have thought,' said Mr. Duval cheerfully. 'Thank you very much, Adolphe; in such matters, yours is an opinion to be relied upon. If ever, when you are off duty of an evening, you would like to come into the Varieties, send round to the Fifth-avenue Hotel, and I will give you my card. We are doing great business, but can always find room for friends.' And Mr. Duval paid his bill, and with a pleasant nod, strolled leisurely into the street.

'So far so good,' said he to himself, when he got outside. 'Now, to make myself quite certain, I will put the question to my old friend, O'Meara, and if he endorses Adolphe's opinion, I shall have no doubt about it that Thornton Carey is right; that this has been some business jealousy, and that there is no woman in the case.'

Judge O'Meara was the presiding justice, or what would be called in England the police magistrate, at the Tombs. Looking at him, there was little reason to ask from what country he originally sprang; his clear blue eyes, short, turn-up nose, and full, red lips proclaimed him a genuine son of Erin. His face was clean shaved, with the exception of a moustache, which, with his reddish-brown hair, was close cropped. His style of administering justice was peculiar, rough and ready, but admitted to be well suited to those with whom he had to do.

As Bryan entered the court, by a door behind the bench, a wretched-looking object had just been hauled before the judge by a stalwart Irish policeman.

'What's this?' cried Judge O'Meara.

'A dead drunken case, your honour,' said the policeman.

'Any violence?'

'No, sir.'

'Go along with you,' said the judge to the prisoner, who hurried off delighted at his discharge.

'What's this?' next asked the judge, as a woman with unkempt hair and a fearfully black eye was placed before him.

'Fighting and making a muss in Green-street,' said the policeman.

'Isn't it Mrs. McCleary?' said the judge, looking hard at her. 'Ah, Bridget, you villain!' he continued, 'you may well hang your head, but we are too old friends for me not to recognise you. Is this the three or four hundredth time I have had you here, Bridget, for battering the boys when you have taken a drop?'

'Judge, darling—' said Mrs. McCleary.

'Whist, Bridget! none of your familiarities before strangers. If I let you go this time, will you swear to keep straight, and not be bringing your country and mine into disgrace?'

'I will, judge, by the Blessed—'

'Get along out of that,' interrupted the judge, and Mrs. McCleary left the court rejoicing.

'Bryan, my dear boy,' said the judge, turning round at the light touch which Duval had laid on his shoulder, 'the sight of you is good for sore eyes. I hear you are packing them in like herrings at the Varieties, and I have not yet had time to come and see you.'

'So I have come to see you, my dear judge,' said Duval, 'and on a little matter of business. They used to say, when I was here before, that you knew every one in New York.'

'It is a little pride of mine to do so,' said the judge. 'I will walk up Broadway this afternoon, and there is not a man, woman, or scarce a child that I cannot tell you something about.'

'Of course, then, you knew Griswold?'

'Is it Alston Griswold, corner of Wall and William? I knew him well.'

'What sort of a fellow is he in his habits?' asked Duval. 'Like you and me, judge, with a tender leaning towards the tender sex?'

'My dear Bryan,' said the judge, 'Alston Griswold is the only one man of my acquaintance who has the least touch of the saint in him that way. I firmly believe he is devoted to his wife, and that even on this journey to Europe, which I hear he has undertaken, he will never let another woman cross his thoughts.'

'Many thanks, judge; you have told me just what I wanted to know. I won't detain you now, more especially as we are to meet at supper to-night at Sutherland's.'

'Delighted to hear you are to be of the party, my boy,' said the judge, waving his hand and returning to his business.

'I beg your pardon, Mr. Duval,' said one of the police superintendents, stepping up to Bryan, as he was making his way out, 'but the mail from Europe has brought us

further information about that murder in which you were interested.'

'Ah, indeed, and what is it?' asked Bryan quickly.

'We have got full particulars of the inquest from London, and copies of the photograph which was found in the watch.'

'The deuce you have,' said Bryan; then muttered to himself, 'It will be known all over the city now.'

'The Liverpool police,' continued the constable, 'are said to be investigating the matter with vigilant intelligence, but the coroner's verdict is an open one, "by some person or persons unknown."'

'Has the body been identified?' asked Bryan.

'By one person only,' said the constable, 'a passenger on board the Birkenhead ferry, who recollected seeing the gentleman leave it in the company of a man dressed as a Methodist preacher, and carrying a parcel wrapped in tarpaulin.'

'Many thanks,' said Bryan. Then, as he turned away, he said to himself: 'I don't mind parsons of the Establishment, but I never did like Methodists; they always do their best to spoil my successes.'

CHAPTER II.

RECOGNISED.

In the course of either her professional or private career, Miss Montressor had never before found herself mixed up with so interesting a concatenation of circumstances. She was too true and intentional an actress, the concentrativeness to which she was hereafter to owe a very considerable success in her profession, ever to be able to lose sight of the dramatic side of any event, but it would be doing her a grievous wrong to say that it was uppermost in her mind on this occasion. She, like most women in her profession, had rarely had an opportunity of coming in contact with well-bred and well-educated women in any other than the most formal and superficial relations. Such an

opportunity was now afforded her, though under melancholy and deeply-affecting circumstances, by the catastrophe which had befallen Helen Griswold, and there arose in the mind of the actress a genuine womanly sympathy, and strong liking for the young widow who bore her trouble with a calmness and a submission which the other, accustomed to the strong lines and the forced expressions of the dramatic rendering of feeling, instinctively admired, though she could not analyse.

Strictly speaking, her one interview with Helen Griswold had served the purposes for which Bryan Duval and Thornton Carey had relied upon her, and she was in no way bound to undergo any further painful emotion in connection with this subject. There had been indeed almost a tone of dismissal in Bryan Duval's manner, when he parted with her after their interview with Mrs. Griswold—something which intimated that she was now free to go and enjoy herself, and

make the most of her stay in a new and delightful scene, where all the honours of popularity awaited her at the hands of the people who best knew how to make popularity pleasant. But Miss Montressor could not shake off the impression which Helen had made upon her, and the following morning, at an hour which rarely witnessed her curtains undrawn or her eyes unclosed, saw her again at the now desolate house in Fifth-avenue. The solemn silence which succeeds to the confusion and dismay of such intelligence as that of which the three had been the bearers on the previous day, had settled down upon the home of the murdered man; the tall front of the house showed long lines of white blinds, there was not a sound to be heard, not a head to be seen at the windows, and for any stir about it, the house itself might have been as dead as its master.

Miss Montressor rang at the bell very gently, and, after a slight delay, was ad-

mitted by a servant whom she had not seen before, and who, therefore, could not identify her with the visitor to Mrs. Jenkins of a previous occasion, but who had no difficulty in discovering that he was addressing the celebrated actress, curiosity concerning whom even present circumstances had not been able thoroughly to repress among the household. Miss Montressor had had no fixed purpose in her mind beyond making an inquiry for Mrs. Griswold, but when she had done so, had been assured that 'she was wonderfully well, considering,' the man, with a thoughtful regard for the feelings of his fellow servants who had not the chance of opening the door to Miss Montressor, suggested that perhaps that lady would like to see the nurse, who could give her full particulars of Mrs. Griswold's state.

Miss Montressor thought she would very much like to see the nurse. The man then showed her into the dining-room, and went

joyfully to inform Mrs. Jenkins of the great chance that had turned up for her.

Mrs. Jenkins glanced into Helen's room, where she was still sleeping heavily under the influence of the opiate, and laying the child, who had dozed off so soundly asleep, by the mother's side, where she must touch her on awakening, went softly down the stairs to meet her sister.

There was no longer any disguise or concealment in the household; the nature of the accident to their master, at which Thornton Carey had dimly hinted when he entreated their care and caution of observing Mrs. Griswold, was now fully known and incessantly discussed among the servants, who had become in some mysterious way thoroughly acquainted with the facts revealed by Bryan Duval and Miss Montressor to their mistress on the preceding day.

Their horror and regret were extreme. Alston Griswold had the good will and good word of all who held a dependent position

with regard to him, and it never occurred to them, as it would have done to English people under similar circumstances, to discern anything sinister in his change of name. If he had called himself Foster instead of Griswold, it was because he had good reasons for it; every one knew how sharp was the practice in his line of business. The newspapers containing accounts of the murder at Liverpool, had been eagerly looked up and read all over again, now that the details had gained additional and ghastly importance, for the members of the Griswolds' household and Mrs. Jenkins had been made thoroughly familiar with all the particulars, extending to Thornton Carey's commission to Jim with regard to the speedy delivery of the telegram. On only two points she had not been informed, for the good and sufficient reason that they had not come to the knowledge of Jim himself. One of these points was the name of the person to whom the telegram had been

despatched, the other was the place from whence the answer was expected.

Mrs. Jenkins closed the door of the dining-room as noiselessly as if Helen, two stories above, might have been disturbed by its sound, and instinctively the two women addressed each other in a whisper.

'O, my dear Bess,' said Miss Montressor, 'what an awful thing this is! To think of our having talked about her that night and what she would wear at the play, and her husband being murdered all the time, and our knowing him.'

'Awful, indeed,' said Mrs. Jenkins, as she seated herself by her sister and possessed herself of her hand, 'but tell me, what is this about this pin?'

'What pin?' asked Miss Montressor, momentarily oblivious.

'The pin you left on the table here yesterday—how did you come by it?'

'How did I come by it—didn't Mrs. Griswold tell you?'

'She! bless you, she has not been able to speak two rational words since the doctor came yesterday.'

'Why, that is one of the great points in the case, Bess. Mr. Foster, or rather Mr. Griswold, gave me that pin a few days before we left London, and told me himself that it belonged to his wife. It went a great way in making us sure that he was Mr. Griswold, and they say it is a most important piece of conviction in case they catch the murderers.'

'Well,' said Mrs. Jenkins, shaking her head, and looking extremely puzzled, 'it is very odd; I have seen that carved head before, only there were two of them, and they were not pins, they were wrist buttons. I know the thing as well as I know my own wedding-ring; and how Mrs. Griswold ever got hold of them is strange, for my Ephraim bought those very heads—I can swear by the little speck in the edge of the cap in that one of them up-stairs now—when he

was travelling with Mr. and Mrs. Moffat, as a courier at Rome, for a mere nothing. He believed them to be shams, but some one who knew all about such things told him afterwards they were nothing of the sort; that they were real antiques—I suppose you know what that means, Clara? I don't, except being very old, and dug up somewhere; and the same person said that the man who sold them to my Eph must have stolen them, for they were worth ten times the price he gave for them, and he got ten times the price when he sold them afterwards to Warren.'

'Who is Warren?' said Miss Montressor.

It was on the tip of Mrs. Jenkins's tongue, when she happily remembered her husband's injunctions not to talk of him, so she simply said:

'Nobody particular; a man Eph knew in the way of business; but I cannot understand how Mrs. Griswold came by them.'

'She probably bought them,' said Miss

Montressor, 'from the other man, and very likely paid him ten times as much as he paid to Eph. That's the way people who have lots of money get done. I don't see any beauty in the pin; and you must understand, Bess,' she continued, assuming a sudden air of very amusing propriety, 'that it was not as a present—at least not deliberate and intentional—I came by the pin. I just could not manage to keep my shawl on with a stupid little pin I had in it, and Mr. Foster took this one out of his scarf, and lent it to me. I never thought more of it till I found it in my shawl here at New York.'

Mrs. Jenkins let the subject drop. She had so nearly erred from her strict fidelity to Eph's directions, that the sooner she put herself out of reach of a similar danger the safer she felt. 'Well, it don't matter,' she said. 'It will be many a long day before Mrs. Griswold will have any thought of such

things again. She kept up wonderfully yesterday, when you and Mr. Carey were here, and even till after the doctor had seen her, but she must have suffered horribly when she shut herself up in her own room, for when it got quite dark, and she hadn't rung her bell, or made no sign, Justine and I got frightened, and we consulted as to what we had better do about going into the room without she had rung her bell; but, at last, I made up my mind I could not bear it any longer, and I took the baby and went in. She was lying all her length on the hearth-rug, with her face hidden in her hair and her hands; not insensible, she was in a kind of stupid despair. She let us lift her up like a log, and she never spoke one word, not even when I brought the baby to her. She just took her little hand up listlessly in hers for a minute, and let it drop.'

In the fulness of her heart, Mrs. Jenkins's homely manner gained a certain dignity of refinement, which acted imme-

diately upon the sensitive nerves of her sister, whose tears fell silently, and who saw with her mental vision the scene her sister's words represented.

'And then we got her into bed, and sent for the doctor. He gave her a sleeping draught, and said she was to be watched. Justine wanted to sit up with her, but I would not let her—she is young, and young people are never wakeful—so I stayed and sat until this morning, just outside the curtain, peeping at her through a little chink where it joined the tester; and through the chink I could see her eyes wide open, quite unchanged all through the hours of night. I suppose it was the medicine that kept her so still, for she neither sighed, moaned, spoke, nor stirred. She might have been a dead woman, with only the eyes alive, until after the sun rose, and then she began to shiver. I put an eider-down over her, and in a few minutes she dropped asleep. I suppose it was the

medicine had its own way at last, and there she is now.'

'The longer she sleeps the better; she has nothing but trouble to wake to,' said Miss Montressor. 'My goodness! I wonder why it is so—what harm did this creature ever do?'

'Ah,' said Mrs. Jenkins, 'and what harm did Mr. Griswold ever do, or anything but good, so far as I can find out? They say here he hasn't an enemy in the world.'

'O, that's all nonsense, my dear!' said Miss Montressor. 'No man ever was so rich, so prosperous, and so happy as Mr. Griswold without having lots of enemies; the only wonderful thing is, that he could have any enemies so much in earnest about it as to run the risk of killing him. I suppose they will find out who did it?'

'Suppose they will find out!' said Mrs. Jenkins. 'Of course they will find out—what's the police for?'

'A good many people have been asking

that same question lately,' said Miss Montressor, with a smile at her sister's simplicity. 'That is not, by a long way, the worst murder that they have not found out. You manage things better over here, I daresay, but in England, for some time past, the police have been making themselves famous either by catching no one at all in cases of crime, or by catching the wrong man.'

'They say it was not robbery,' said Mrs. Jenkins, 'but that he was taken for somebody else.'

'That's all hearsay, my dear,' replied Miss Montressor, with an air of superior wisdom. 'Don't talk about it to the other servants, but I may tell you in confidence that Bryan Duval, who is about the best detective going, has very little doubt that the motive, if not the murderer, is to be found on this side the Atlantic.'

'No,' said Mrs. Jenkins; 'you don't say so! Then you may depend upon it he will be hunted down, because they tell me here

there is no man more respected or liked than Mr. Griswold, in general; but that he has one friend whose devotion is quite a talk in the place.'

'Ah,' said Miss Montressor; 'I suppose that is Mr. Warren they were inquiring about yesterday? It is rather a pity he is away just now.'

Again Mrs. Jenkins felt herself on dangerous ground, and once more withdrew from it, changing the conversation to her sister's prospects and proceedings in New York.

The interview between the sisters lasted long, and was undisturbed by any summons from Helen. Once, in the course of it, Mrs. Jenkins went softly up-stairs, and looked into the room, whose stillness she dreaded to find roused into act of suffering. But Helen was still sleeping, with her child by her side. At first sight the scene was one of quiet and touching beauty, for the baby's face lay close to that of the girlish

mother, and both looked equally fair; but on a nearer inspection, it might be seen that Helen's lips were colourless, and were marked with a dry, black line that comes of artificial sleep supervening upon acute suffering; and the waxen eyelids, which ranked among the chief beauties of her face, were tinged with purple; the weight of the weary head indented the pillow deeply, and the hands, listlessly stretched out, were cold and heavy. Mrs. Jenkins made some slight change in the attitude of the sleeper, fearing the constrained, long-maintained position, and again left her.

'She is sleeping still,' she said. 'One cannot look at her without thinking what a good thing it would be if she were never to wake.'

'O, nonsense, my dear Bess,' said Miss Montressor, who, having talked it out fully, was experiencing release from the tension of nerves occasioned by her excitement and genuine sympathy. 'It is an awful thing,

no doubt, but she has youth, strength, and wealth to pull her through it—and these things do pull people through, somehow or other. She will be bright and happy again after a while, and then you will be very glad that the poor child is not left fatherless and motherless too, at one blow.'

'Yes, to be sure, Clara—you are right,' said Mrs. Jenkins. 'If women were easily killed, especially by trouble, there would not be much gray hair to be seen on women's heads in the world—what a deal they have to go through in comparison with men!'

'Well, men are mostly let off easy,' said Miss Montressor; 'but after all, it is Mr. Griswold that has been murdered, recollect.'

They entered no further upon this metaphysical subject, and Miss Montressor shortly after rose to go.

'Are the gentlemen coming again today?' asked Mrs. Jenkins, while her sister was resuming her bonnet and jacket.

'I believe so,' replied Miss Montressor. 'Bryan Duval said something about it being necessary that Mrs. Griswold should see some of the police authorities, in order to give any information in her power that may throw light upon Mr. Griswold's correspondents. It appears that he wrote a great many business letters at home, so that the office papers are not sufficiently explicit to account for all his business transactions. I don't know when they are coming, but I think it is settled for to-day.'

'Then,' said Mrs. Jenkins, looking very serious, 'I think that is exceedingly wrong. I am quite certain Mrs. Griswold will be unable to see anybody, judging by her looks at present; for even when she was in no trouble I have known her perfectly stupefied for twenty-four hours after taking an opiate. I think it would be very cruel to hurt her, and I am quite sure it would be useless. They had much better not come here to-day, and I am quite certain that the doctor would

strongly object to anything of the sort if he knew how long it was before she got rest.'

'Has he not been here this morning?'

'No; the orders were that he was to be sent for when she woke, but that she was not to be disturbed on any account, until the effect should go off naturally.'

'Shall I, then, tell Bryan Duval,' said Miss Montressor, 'that you think it would be useless to make any attempt at taking her evidence to-day? He is very energetic and deeply interested in this business, but he has a great objection to wasting his time on his own account, or on other people's account; and if she could not see them, he would be greatly annoyed at having been brought up here on a useless errand. Suppose you were to send round and ask the doctor, Bess?'

Mrs. Jenkins thought this an excellent suggestion, and forthwith proceeded to carry it out by means of Jim, who she inter-

viewed in the hall, mindful of her sister's incognito.

'You've a head worth half a dozen,' was Jim's approving comment upon the commission with which he was intrusted, to the increase of his own sense of importance, which had been largely cultivated by Thornton Carey's confidence. 'I will just go round at once, and ask whether Mrs. Griswold is to be disturbed on any account whatever.'

Jim departed on his errand, and returned with marvellous celerity. The doctor's orders were that Mrs. Griswold was not to be disturbed, was not to be allowed to see any one, and he added that he would look in at five o'clock in the afternoon.

'Then I tell you what it is, Bess,' said Miss Montressor. 'I will just make the best of my way back to the hotel, and put off this appointment; Bryan Duval will know where Mr. Carey is to be found.'

Mrs. Jenkins accompanied her sister to

the street-door, and once again encountered Mr. Thornton Carey there. He had come in order to ascertain the very fact of which Miss Montressor was about to apprise him, and perfectly agreed, on hearing their report, that no further steps should be taken on that day. He looked exceedingly worn and weary, and in answer to Miss Montressor's eager inquiries, informed her that no further information had transpired, but that his own conviction that the murder had been at first instigated from this side was deepened by every additional item of information which he had been able to gain respecting the magnitude and complication of Mr. Griswold's commercial transactions, and the conflicting interests involved in their failure or success.

* * * * *

When her sister left her, accompanied by Thornton Carey, Mrs. Jenkins returned to her watch in Helen's room, from which she removed the infant, by this time awake.

Lurking under all her true womanly sympathy and acts of helpfulness in the great calamity of the household was a sense of deep personal disappointment; the heart of Mrs. Jenkins was filled with two great affections, one towards her husband, the other towards her sister, and her intellect contemplated but two absorbing pleasures; the first, the presence of her Ephraim was denied to her by Fate in so conclusive a manner that she had ceased to fret over it, for practical common sense had a large share in her organisation; the second, a personal observation of her sister's celebrity, success, and proficiency in her profession she had counted upon as within her reach, and now the great event had taken place, the star actor and his company were in possession of the boards of the Varieties, all New York was talking of Miss Montressor, the papers contained specific and voluminous descriptions of her appearance, dress, manners, and also indulged in dainty anecdotes respecting off-

the-boards utterances of hers to the favoured few who had yet seen her in private. From all these glories and delights Mrs. Jenkins was excluded by hard Fate, which had hit her by a back-handed blow. Once or twice she had cherished for a moment the notion of slipping out for half an hour, and occupying some unobtrusive corner of the theatre, where she might see her sister for a few minutes in one of her great impersonations, and slipping back again unsuspected, but her better feelings utterly prevailed over the temptation. She could not leave her mistress, and she could not bear the contrast which the gaiety and brilliancy and pleasure of a theatre would present to the awful desolation of the fine house to which she had once thought of coming from the poverty and the difficulties that had condemned her to parting with Ephraim. 'It must be sheer heaven to live so,' she said. With just one sigh, given to the recollection of the high hope with which she had heard

the promise of her sister's coming, she went back to the painful round of her duties, many of them self-imposed.

Helen Griswold had the faculty of winning the love of all those in her employment, and there was not a servant in the house who would not willingly have shared Mrs. Jenkins's watch, but she had a notion that as she was the only wife and mother among them, she could draw nearer to the bereaved wife and mother who still lay there in merciful unconsciousness; so the hours wore away and Mrs. Jenkins watched her patient. The doctor came, looked at the sleeping form on the bed, felt the pulse, touched the clammy forehead, listened to the faltering breath, and went his way, declaring it still safe to leave her undisturbed.

'If she could sleep all round the clock,' said he, 'so much the better. Twenty-four hours' oblivion is not to be lightly thought of in such a case as hers.'

'I am afraid, sir,' said Mrs. Jenkins, 'she will have to see the police people to-morrow, that it cannot be put off longer, because they talk of sending an agent to England by the next mail.'

'In that case,' said the doctor, 'when she wakes let her have food and stimulants; take her up, give her a warm bath, and, according as you find her nerves stronger and her mind clearer, prepare her for the task that lies before her. I shall see her in the morning, and will remain here to meet the gentlemen who are coming.'

Late that night Thornton Carey again called to hear the doctor's last report, which he did from Mrs. Jenkins, and then, begging, if possible, to prepare Mrs. Griswold for the trying visit upon which they were obliged to insist, at eleven o'clock on the following day, he went down to the theatre, where the performance was just coming to a close, and joined Bryan Duval. They returned to the Fifth-avenue Hotel

together, and held a long conference, which lasted long into the night.

Immediately after Thornton Carey left Mrs. Jenkins, she once more pressed into her service the indefatigable Jim, despatching him with a note to Miss Montressor, adopting the periodical fiction that Mr. Carey had employed her to communicate on his behalf with that lady, who wished to know the latest accounts of Mrs. Griswold; but the purport of her note was to beg that Clara would come up to the house as early as she could on the following morning. 'The truth is,' wrote Mrs. Jenkins to her sister, 'I am exceedingly worn out, and though they are very willing up here, they have not much sense; and in case there is a great to-do to-morrow morning with the gentlemen and the police people, I do not feel equal to it all by myself or with only Justine, who is as incapable as any foreigner I have ever met, though not bad meaning. So, my dear Clara, come up

if you can at all. Mrs. Griswold, who has been sitting up and talking quite rational, has taken a great fancy to you, and would, I am sure, be very glad that you should be with her in case I broke down altogether, which does not seem unlikely, and would be a very bad job, especially for baby.'

As this invention jumped precisely with Miss Montressor's own wishes, she acceded to it with great alacrity, and with the full and cordial consent of Bryan Duval, with whom she communicated that very night.

'Quite right, my dear Clara; you are a capital person in emergencies, and everything of the sort is first-rate study.'

Miss Montressor arrived early, and was again conducted to the dining-room, where her sister soon joined her.

'Mrs. Griswold had passed a good night, and was wonderfully composed.' Mrs. Jenkins related admiringly how she had risen early that morning, allowed herself to be carefully dressed, striven to eat the food

which was prepared for her, and made a great effort to be cheerful and considerate towards her attendants. 'The only thing she is not equal to,' said Mrs. Jenkins, 'is trying to play with baby. She just looks at her until the tears come, and then she turns away. Now she is quite ready to see Mr. Duval and Mr. Carey, and I have left her sitting before her writing-table, with a pile of papers and letters, sorting them all as regularly and orderly as possible. She said so meekly, "I must not waste these gentlemen's time, or give them trouble, you know. I must be prepared for them." They do say in the house that she never knew anything about business, and that Mr. Griswold thought she had no head for it; but I am greatly mistaken if she hasn't a head for anything she might choose to employ it in. She knows you are coming, Clara, and said she thought it very kind of you, indeed, and that she would be quite able to see you before the gentlemen came; but I think

that would be a risk. She would get talking to you about everything Mr. Griswold said and did during the time you knew him, and that would be sure to make her cry. I daresay there is not much composure really in her; but the more she can keep her manner composed the better, and those violent fits of crying are so exhausting.'

'You are quite right, Bess,' returned Miss Montressor. 'I would much rather not see her until after they have all gone away; then it will do her good to talk it over in detail with me, and then to cry her poor eyes out if she likes. So if you will just put me into a room handy to the one you will put these people in, I will be ready in case you are wanted. The only thing you must not do is give me the baby to hold, for I don't know anything about babies, and, to tell the truth, I don't like them.'

With this amicable understanding, the

two sisters were about to walk up-stairs, and Mrs. Jenkins had assumed the distant manner which she always put on when there was a risk of their encountering any of the other servants, when their progress was interrupted by overhearing a dialogue which was taking place in the hall between Jim and an unknown individual.

'Whoever can it be?' said Mrs. Jenkins. 'There are such strict orders for no one but Mr. Duval and Mr. Carey, and the people with them, to come in, that I cannot understand who Jim can be parleying with. I will just go and see.'

Mrs. Jenkins opened the dining-room door just sufficient to enable her to catch sight of the unknown individual, and to whom Jim was protesting, with characteristic vehemence, that something or other which he had demanded was an out-and-out impossibility.

The stranger was a man of rather low stature and slight figure, dressed in a loose,

shaggy coat, with a low felt hat pulled down over his eyes, so as effectually to hide all the upper part of the face, and he was speaking to Jim with great urgency, placing one hand against the door, as if he dreaded that the servant, in the strict appreciation of his duty, would close it against him by force. 'I must see Mrs. Griswold,' he said; 'I must, indeed.'

'It is quite impossible, sir; Mrs. Griswold cannot see any one. You surely do not know the trouble the house is in, or you would not think of asking such a thing. You must send up your message.'

'I cannot send up my message,' said the stranger, 'it is totally impossible; pray take up my request to Mrs. Griswold.'

'I assure you, sir, it is useless to persist,' said Jim, 'and quite out of the question that you should see Mrs. Griswold. Do you really not know what has happened?'

'I know nothing,' returned the man.

'Then, sir,' said Jim, 'you had better

know it—Mr. Griswold is dead, and what's more, he has met with foul play.'

The stranger started a little and exclaimed: 'How very dreadful! But is there nothing else wrong? Is there nothing wrong with any one in the house?'

'No, nothing,' replied Jim, 'except that Mrs. Griswold is very ill indeed, as might be expected; and you will now see, sir, how impossible it is that she could receive you.'

'I fear it is impossible. Can I not see any other member of the family?'

'There is no female,' returned Jim, 'except the baby, and she ain't weaned; but you can see Mrs. Jenkins, the nurse, if you will step into the dining-room; in case that can do you any good, I will go and call her down to you.'

In the general confusion, Jim, who had momentarily forgotten all about Miss Montressor, advanced to the dining-room, followed by the stranger, simply threw the

door open, allowed him to pass through it, and without having glanced into the room, went on his errand in search of Mrs. Jenkins, who had withdrawn from the door and closed it as the sound of the stranger's voice reached her ears; also, to Miss Montressor's amazement, she had sat down, looking exceedingly pale and faint; she was realising her apprehensions, Miss Montressor thought, and breaking down in earnest.

It was only a minute from the time Mrs. Jenkins stepped back from the door until the stranger walked into the dining-room, at the farther end of which were the two women, who both rose at the sight of him. One, Mrs. Jenkins, cried out, 'Ephraim!' and rushed towards him; while the other, standing still in rigid amazement, exclaimed, 'Mr. Dolby!'

CHAPTER III.

A WAY OF ESCAPE.

THE amazement of Miss Montressor had a double origin; the primary one, that Mr. Dolby should turn up, in this unexpected and extraordinary manner, in a place with which he had no connection that she had the most remote suspicion of; the secondary one, that her sister should have rushed into that gentleman's arms, and called him 'Ephraim.' Within the last few days her mind had been so absorbed in the terrible details of the Griswold story, that Mr. Dolby had hardly crossed it; and positively since that morning she had never remembered his existence until the fact was recalled to her in this unprecedented fashion. When she had thought of him at

all, it was always with the fixed idea that he had preceded her to America for the purpose of watching her, and now she firmly believed her suspicions to be realised; but even the rapidity of thought did not enable her to do more than realise this fact before her sister said, turning to her, while she still clutched the stranger by the arm, 'This is my husband, Clara; what can you mean by calling him Mr. Dolby?'

Never had the self-possession inseparable from anything like a fair proficiency in her art stood Miss Montressor in such stead as at this moment. She recovered herself instantly, and replied, 'My dear Bess, is this really your husband, your Ephraim of whom we were talking only a few minutes ago? How very odd that an accidental but strong likeness should have led me to have imagined he was a friend of mine!'

'So he will be a friend of yours, I suppose,' said Mrs. Jenkins, with just the slightest possible revival of a combatant

tone in her voice; for even the joy of her husband's unexpected return could not silence her from some measure of protest against her sister's indifference. 'And what in the world has brought you back, Eph, and why did you not tell me you were coming?'

'Why in the world was I sent for, Bess?' was Ephraim Jenkins's reply, as he fixed his eyes upon his wife's face with an unmistakably sincere expression of surprise.

Miss Montressor was not prepared to find her sister's husband a good-looking, gentlemanly, and well-dressed man; but these circumstances made no difference at all in the sensation of quiet, sincere, and irrepressible vexation with which she regarded this meeting. It was her most earnest wish that she should never be brought in contact with Jenkins under any circumstances; but to meet him under the present, and at Mrs. Griswold's, where she had such strong motives for disguising her

identity with Mrs. Jenkins's sister, was especially annoying to her. Of course the secret could not be kept now, was almost her first thought, but it was worth trying for, and so she unceremoniously interrupted the explanation which Ephraim was about to give to his astonished wife by hurriedly explaining to him that no one must know of their relationship.

'Bess has made me a solemn promise,' she said, 'that she will not tell it, and I expect you to observe it for her sake.'

'Whoever do you suppose I am going to talk to about you,' said Jenkins roughly, with an instantaneous relief, throwing off all the gentlemanly manner and appearance, which was the merest disguise, and with which he equally discarded his previously striking resemblance to Mr. Dolby. 'Bess knows her own business, so do you; and if you don't want to acknowledge her, I'm not going to peach.'

'Thank you,' said Miss Montressor, with

great self-command, and she actually put out her hand graciously to her detested brother-in-law.

He took it rather sulkily, and growled out that she need not be in such a hurry to disavow folks that didn't want anything from her.

'That's not my motive,' said Miss Montressor, 'as Bess will explain to you. But I must go now; she won't want me to stay with her now she has got you.'

'O, pray don't go!' exclaimed Mrs. Jenkins. 'I do want to talk to Ephraim, and find out how it is that he has dropped from the clouds in this unexpected way, but perhaps you won't mind staying all the same. There is no one in the boudoir, and I could take you up there while I talk to Ephraim. Mr. Duval and Mr. Carey will be here very shortly.'

Good-nature and curiosity united induced Miss Montressor to comply with her sister's request. 'Very well,' she said; 'I

will go to the boudoir; you need not take me up, I know my own way there. Don't you remember, Bess, I have been all over the house with you.' And she went towards the door, but just as she had reached it, Ephraim Jenkins stopped her with a question.

'Would you mind telling me, Miss Montressor,' he said ceremoniously, and with a half-ironical sort of bow, 'who was the individual for whom you did me the honour to mistake me just now? Would you mind mentioning his name? I find it quite unpleasant enough to have one double, as I have already, without being accommodated with two.'

'I mistook you,' she said, 'for Mr. George Dolby, who is an American, like yourself, whom I knew very well in London. Pray don't be offended; I assure you you might very well accept my error as a compliment.'

'Mr. George Dolby,' repeated Ephraim,

with an intent frown upon his face as of one trying painfully to retrace a track of thought or to work out a puzzle; 'Mr. George Dolby, an American? Is the gentleman in New York just now?'

'To the best of my belief,' returned Miss Montressor briefly, 'he is;' and with that she left the room.

'By Jove, Bess,' said Jenkins, laying his hand upon his wife's shoulder, holding her at a little distance from him, and looking into her face with an expression of strange mingled suspicion, curiosity, and amusement, 'it is Warren, and he has been up to his game with her in London—it must be, you know; but I am precious glad he has come back, though why he should not have let me know he is back, I cannot tell. However, his being here at New York gets me out of a devil of a mess that I should have been very much puzzled how to get out of myself; though I will tell you what it is,' he continued, drawing her

close to him and kissing her fondly, 'I would have got into it ten times over, and trusted to my own luck, or the devil's own luck, to get out of it, for the relief the sight of your face gave me, and when I found there was nothing wrong with you.'

'But what brought you here, Eph, and how came you to think there was anything wrong with me?'

His wife was not to be won from her uneasiness, or diverted from her wish to understand precisely what had occurred, by even the affectionate assurance which was so dear to her, and she reiterated her question very earnestly.

'We shall have very little uninterrupted time, Eph,' she said; 'awful things have happened here. Mr. Griswold has been murdered in England—you must have seen all about it in the papers?'

'No, I didn't; I should have known the meaning if I had, on account of Warren as

well as on account of you, Bess; for I haven't forgot, and I don't mean to, how kind Mrs. Griswold has been to you. Poor thing, she is awfully cut up, I suppose.'

'She's just heartbroken, Eph, and the police are coming here presently to make her tell all she knows, poor soul; and as I was saying to Nelly—to Clara, I mean—just now, that's not much, for they do say Mr. Griswold was the closest man in New York about his affairs; and I must leave you then and go to her; so you must tell me as much as you can as quick as you can. Take off that great heavy coat, Eph, and that hat, and sit down.'

'No, no; I mustn't do that, Bess,' replied Jenkins, drawing the coat still more closely round him, and ramming the hat still further down over his eyes by a blow on the crown. 'Whatever are you thinking about? They know Warren perfectly well here, and if they either took me for him, and found out I'm somebody else, or else if

they discovered that there's anybody about so uncommon like him as I am, they might have their suspicions roused, and set to look for him directly. And that would not pay, Bess, my dear, neither on his account nor on my own; for though I don't suppose they could do me much harm, and for certain they couldn't make me out to be up to any—deliberate harm, I mean—of course, it ain't altogether on the square, this lay I'm on for Warren. And, then, if he should be up to anything out-of-the-way-fishy, which I'm sometimes tempted to suspect, and they find out that he is not at Chicago while he's pretending to be there, even suppose they couldn't molest me at all, they certainly could stop *his* little game; and in our present circumstances, Bess, my girl, we must remember that stopping his little game means stopping our rations.'

'Yes, yes,' said Mrs. Jenkins mournfully, twisting the end of her apron about in her fingers in a way habitual to her in

perplexity. 'I know that, Eph; and yet I cannot tell you how uneasy and wretched I am feeling, and have been feeling ever since we parted, and you went to undertake this dark and dirty business for Warren. Dark we know it is, and dirty I cannot but suspect it to be. O Eph, could you but give it up? If you only would be satisfied to stick regularly to some kind of fixed work, and let us live respectable, however poor!'

'We couldn't easily be poorer than we've been when we lived disrespectable,' said Jenkins, with a kind of surly good humour; 'and I think I could stick to work if only the pay would stick *to me*—but where is it to be had? You can't have forgotten, Bess, how hard I have had to work in this place, and how I never got any for a constancy—yes, yes, I know what your shake of the head means, and you've good right to shake it, I'm not going for a moment to deny that—and how, then,

Warren was always giving me, or getting somebody else to get me, odd jobs. Well, one can't work steadily at odd jobs; it ain't in the nature of things, nor yet in one's own nature. If one's business is unsteady, one must be unsteady with it; and where anything except odd jobs is to come from, especially if I vex Warren, and he shunts me off in earnest, I cannot guess. Can you?'

'I think, Eph—indeed I am sure—Mrs. Griswold would be a good friend to us, if you would let me tell her the truth—I don't mean about Warren, of course, but about our difficulties. I think she would get you a fixed place somewhere, through Mr. Carey's influence—and Warren would never hear of it; or if he did hear of it, he would know, by her ignorance of your being his brother, that you had not betrayed his secret. And, after all, he would then be effectually rid of us, Ephraim, and I think he would be very glad to be rid of us—or

I should say of you, because he does not know of my existence—at the price of having his pride hurt by Mrs. Griswold or Mr. Carey observing that there is a strong likeness between him and the husband of her baby's nurse. Do think of it, Ephraim, and let me ask her, when she has got over her great trouble a little, and can look beyond it for the sake of other people. It will not be long first, for she is the most unselfish woman, I do believe, in all the world. Will you let me speak to her, Eph, when I can get an opportunity?'

'Well,' replied Ephraim Jenkins, with a little reluctance in his tone, as of an instinctive, irrepressible shrinking from the burden of a threatened respectability in the future, combined with regular hours and regular work, 'I don't mind—only, you know, *I must* see this piece of business through to the end; and now, Bess, I must tell you what has brought me here; you were awfully anxious to know a few minutes

ago, until you went off at a tangent all about Mrs. Griswold, and a fixed occupation and what not, and now you seem to have forgotten all about it.'

'No, I haven't, Ephraim dear,' replied his wife, as she put her arm round his neck, and looked earnestly into his face; 'only the first feeling of fright has gone off in the pleasure of seeing you again so unexpected—for it did give me a shock of fright as well as a shock of joy. I suppose it was some business of Warren's?'

'*I* suppose it is too,' he said; 'but I only suppose, for I don't *know*—and you have thrown more light on it since I came than it has had on it all through the journey, and before I started; for I came off in such a desperate mortal fright about you, my girl, that I never remembered, until I was hours on my way, that the telegram was intended for Warren, and not for me at all.'

'What telegram, Ephraim? I am all

astray—I don't understand you. Did you get a telegram? From whom?'

'Yes, *I* got a telegram, but I suppose, as you are all right, the message could not have had anything to do with me.'

He took out of a breast-pocket in his shaggy overcoat a crumpled and a dirty telegraph form, which was to the following effect:

'From Thornton Carey, New York, to Trenton Warren, 3 Bryan's Block, Chicago. You are earnestly requested by Mrs. Griswold to come to New York without delay. It is of the utmost importance that she should see you. A terrible calamity has occurred.'

Mrs. Jenkins read this document twice over with the seriousness of a person unaccustomed to telegrams, and then returned it to Ephraim. 'The terrible calamity, of course, means Mr. Griswold's murder.'

'Of course that is clear enough now; but can you not understand, Bess, that not

knowing a word of that, and merely having this vague instruction, and being so accustomed to be and see myself called Trenton Warren in words and in writing, and, above all, having my mind so full of you, the mere notion of a calamity in connection with this house meant merely *you* for my fears, and I started at once, never remembering that Mrs. Griswold could not possibly have meant to address me. It all came quite clear to me after a while, but then I began to torment myself again with fresh fears. "What," I thought, "if Bess should be very ill and dying, and have confessed it all to this kind woman whom she likes, and Mrs. Griswold should have taken this clever way of letting me know that she knows, and that I need not be afraid of anything but just come to her at once?" From the instant *that* flashed into my thoughts, Bess, you may guess I was in an agony to get on every mile of the road, and I give you my word I could hardly drag myself up the stoop to ring at the door-

bell, so completely had that second notion taken possession of my mind. I was in such a state of alarm and suspense that, God forgive me, I do believe the news that old fellow told me at the door did not seem half terrible to me.'

'You were always fond of me, Eph, any way,' said his wife, as she kissed him heartily, while tears glittered in her frank sweet eyes.

'I should think so, Bess,' he replied. 'I am bad enough, I know, but not such a duffer, no, nor such a brute neither, as I should be if I ever leave off being *that.* Hollo! there's somebody coming. I hope it isn't the police people, in which case I had better clear out. I can come back, you know, when they're gone; but I've a constitutional objection, to say nothing of the present circumstances, to being inside a house with them.'

The approaching steps were not those of undesirable intruders. It was only Annette, who had brought the baby—she car-

ried the little creature very much as Moggs carried Gabriel Varden's sword, as if she was terribly afraid of it—to her nurse. Annette explained that the child having grown restless, madame had rung her bell, and asked for Mrs. Jenkins, and on being told that Mrs. Jenkins had a friend to see her, she had merely asked her to carry the child down to her. Annette reported that madame was still where Mrs. Jenkins had left her, sitting at her writing-table sorting letters and other papers, and that she was quite composed, though looking very ill and mortally pale. And Annette, to whom Miss Montressor had been most gracious, had just glanced into the boudoir as she came down-stairs, and found the celebrity fast asleep.

Mrs. Jenkins laughed. Her sister had always been famous for a most enviable power of going to sleep. 'I never remember a time when Nelly—Clara, I mean—could not eat and sleep, no matter what happened,

or to whom it occurred,' she said admiringly to Ephraim, who remembered that those faculties were useful, but not particularly sentimental, 'and that for his part, he liked a touch of nerves about a woman; leastways what some people called nerves, but he called feelings.'

In this pointed remark Ephraim Jenkins did injustice to his fair sister-in-law. Miss Montressor was by no means deficient in feeling, but she was very healthy, and just now she was very tired, so that it was her nature to sleep under the circumstances, and sleep she accordingly did. Having made her communications, Annette tripped out of the room, after having honoured Mrs. Jenkins's visitor with a condescending bow and a long, steady, attentive stare, of which he was uncomfortably conscious, and which he tried to avoid, but in vain.

He need not have felt alarmed, however, at any risk of recognition by Mdlle. Annette. She merely remarked in soliloquy,

'How all these Yankees resemble one another in an astonishing fashion. When one has seen one of them, one has seen them all, except just in the regard of height and thinness. It is only in France that we find variety of physiognomy.'

'What a pretty child!' said Ephraim Jenkins, touching the infant's dimpled cheek with his finger, as it lay close to his wife's breast—'not much like our poor little man, Bess?'

'No, bless her heart; not like him in the plump healthy face, but sweet and clever like him;' and the mother, who had not buried her dead out of her memory, hugged the baby with a slight rapidly-suppressed sob, and loved her husband all the more dearly for the reference to the little crippled sufferer who had been her treasure and her heartache in one.

'Now then, Bess, we must consult about what is to be done, for I do think things look extremely queer. The last communi-

cation I had from Warren was from London, and there was nothing at all unusual in it; he merely enclosed some letters to be sent on to New York, and sent me a lot of blank signatures. He has never given me the slightest inkling of what his business in England is really about. By the bye, isn't it odd that there should be the same sort of mystery about what Mr. Griswold has been doing over there? I wonder if they were in the same boat.'

'I have heard Mr. Warren spoken of among the servants,' said Mrs. Jenkins, 'as being Mr. Griswold's greatest friend, but I have never heard them say anything about any business partnership between them, and there is no other name in the firm that I know of.'

'O, then I suppose they were not mixed up in business,' said Ephraim, 'and I must say, knowing what I do of my worthy brother, I should feel inclined to add, so much the better for poor Mr. Griswold during his

own lifetime, and for those whom he has left to profit by his gains. I suspect they would find them materially reduced if Warren had had the handling of any of them. Of course, I have not had much to do with his affairs down at Chicago; but there is a precious lot of bogus in what I have had to do with, and I have been asked some very nasty questions lately—in writing, of course, I mean, and in his person, which I was totally unable to answer; and as he didn't authorise me to go in for cable expenses, I have been obliged to leave them unanswered, and I expect some of my correspondents are getting rather impatient under these circumstances. Bess, you will observe that what Miss Montressor let out just now when she took me for Mr. Dolby has rather a curious meaning; for suppose Warren should have left London, as her account of Mr. Dolby seems to imply, he will not have got my last letters informing him of the dilemma in which I find myself; and how I am to

get out of it I am sure I can't tell, should this be the case. Of course, as long as I felt sure he was in England, it was tolerably plain sailing; there was nothing to fear but delay; but if he has left England and come back here, and is hiding about anywhere and not communicating with me, I consider something much worse than delay is to be apprehended, and I don't at all bargain for getting into any extensive and difficult scrape in the matter. So that you see I had more motives than one in coming up immediately on receipt of the telegram; because, though I really did make the blunder I have told you of in forgetting that it could not be addressed to me in reality, I have had for some weeks a great wish to find out, if possible, what Warren is about. I don't think I can be involved in any serious mischief, because I have taken such care never to forge his name—all papers that have left my hands bearing it are genuine signatures.'

'That's a comfort,' said Bess; 'but how can you find out anything about him here? You can't go to any of the places where he is known without betraying him.'

'That's just my difficulty,' said Jenkins, 'because it's a perfectly new light to me that his real business friends here, the people with whom he is actually mixed up in big transactions, verily and indeed believe him to be at Chicago. My notion was that it was only some one or two particular persons he wanted to impose upon; but the matter takes a completely different complexion now that I find out his most confidential people here believe him to be where he is not.'

'How do you know they are also imposed upon?' asked Bess.

'By the telegram, my dear. Of course Mr. Carey must have got the address from Mrs. Griswold, or at Warren's office—there can be no two ways about that—and of course, under the circumstances, they would

not deceive him, nor can Mrs. Griswold be reasonably supposed to be in ignorance of his whereabouts. If any one was to be in the secret, it would be the people in this house; and now it is plain that Warren is deceiving them all round, and, you see, it isn't pleasant. He was always a good hand at getting from out of one more than one bargained for; but I must say, in this matter I should like to know what amount of dirty work I am expected to do, and how deep the dirtiness is.'

Jenkins had said all this in his usual light and careless way, and while he was speaking had kept playing with the baby in his wife's arms; but she, watching him closely, discerned very real alarm and anxiety under his slightly-swaggering manner and at once well-founded fright.

'Ephraim,' she said, laying her hand upon his arm impressively, 'have you ever been sorry for listening to my advice?'

'Never, Bess,' he replied; 'but I have

very often been sorry for not listening to it.'

'Well,' she said, 'hear it and take it now. Of course, I understand no more, but a good deal less, of what your brother's object and actions are than you do; but something within me, something which I have heard before now in my life, and which never told me a lie, says plainly to me that you have put yourself into a dreadful danger; that whatever Warren is about it can be no good, and it is going wrong. Just think for a moment. I suppose it was for the best of purposes in the world, but how mad a thing it must be for any man well known in business in a great city like New York to imagine that he could successfully pretend to be in one place while he is in another, in these days of telegraphs, for any length of time beyond a few hours or days at the outside. He is a clever man, well up in business, and must have known this,—the difficulty would have been quite

plain to him,—and therefore it is only reasonable to conclude that he had some motive for running this great risk strong enough to induce him to throw aside all his knowledge of business, and all his shrewd habits of calculating the consequences. Is this motive likely to be a good one, to say nothing of the crooked ways and the deceit through which he has to carry it out? I think you know your brother by this time too well to give him credit for good motives; besides, good things do not need doing in the dark. Now I will tell you what you must do, Eph, and you must do it at once if you want to save me from distraction, and yourself from being mixed up in the ruin which I am certain is coming on Warren. Whatever he intended to do while he was supposed to be at Chicago he intended to do quicker than this; he never can have imagined that the sham could be prolonged up to this time; and your not having heard from him, his not having re-

turned, or, if what Miss Montressor says is the case, that he has been passing under the name of Dolby, and that he has come back to America, which would make it all look much more extraordinary and more dangerous, it is plain that he has failed, and failure in any object which he had to gain by such risky means must have a big meaning, and you must get out of it, Eph.'

'Get out of it, Bess? How am I to get out of it? I will do anything you tell me; you have got a clearer head than mine—since I have been down there at Chicago I have come to think myself no end of a bungler—but all your clear-headedness won't see my way out of this fix, at all events until we can get hold of Warren. If he comes back and shows up, I will promise you I will face him, and tell him at once that I will have no more of it, come what may; and I can't stir a peg until he does come.'

'Yes you can, Eph, and you must,' said

his wife; 'you must, or we shall be utterly ruined, without doing him any good. I feel convinced this is no business matter, but something very bad, in which he has not succeeded, and which will involve us all. Now this is what you must do. Get back to Chicago without an hour's delay, without seeing any one, bring away all the business papers, take them to Warren's real place of business, and get off to England.'

Jenkins stared at her in open-eyed wonder. 'Get off to England! What on earth for?'

'How can I tell?' she said, rather impatiently. 'I speak under an irresistible impulse and a great fear. You must have done with this thing, and this is the only way to get rid of it.'

'But I haven't money to do all this,' said Jenkins. 'You don't suppose Warren would trust me with more than he could help; and if I were to leave him in the lurch in this way, I shouldn't like to take any in

advance, you know; that would look as ugly as anything he may have been doing, for I suppose the worst of it has been dabbling in other people's dollars.'

'Don't fret about that,' said his wife; 'there is a good deal coming to me, and I have had some handsome presents since I have been here, from people who have come to see the baby. I said nothing about it to you in my letters, because I thought I should like to have a little fund saved to give you a pleasant surprise. How thankful I am for it now! Even if it should not be enough, I know Mrs. Griswold, who has been most kind and generous to me, will help me, help me too in her ladylike and considerate way, without asking me any distressing questions. Besides, there is Nelly —Clara, I mean—she would help me in a minute; but I would rather not ask her for any help of that kind, but rather trust her to get you some employment in England.'

'You're settling it all, Bess,' said Eph,

shaking his head doubtfully, but still with a lightening of his countenance and an additional cheerfulness in his voice, which brought the consoling conviction to his wife's mind that he was rapidly being swayed by her argument, and seeing in her own she was tracing relief and a future. 'You're settling it all very comfortably, and I believe you're right that it is about the best thing I could do.'

'It is the only thing!' said Bess emphatically.

'I don't like leaving you behind,' he said; 'there's a big difference between being parted as we are now, you in New York and I in Chicago, and being parted as we should be then, you in New York and I Heaven knows where, on the other side of the ferry; and I don't like it.'

'I don't like it either,' said Mrs. Jenkins; 'but it can't be otherwise, Eph dear, just now. You and I have to turn over a new leaf—you know you have promised me

you will begin, and I believe you—but it is likely to be hard work just at first, and we shall want help from good friends. The best I have in the world, I feel quite sure, is Mrs. Griswold, and I could not desert her in this great trouble; first, for gratitude sake; secondly, for policy sake; and thirdly, because if I ask her to help us I must be ready to say I am prepared to help her. That is only fair, you know; but I will follow you, Eph, before very long, before the little store of money I shall be able to let you take with you is exhausted, even if you should not have good luck. But I feel you will have good luck, and Nelly—Clara, I mean—will be sure to be able to get something for you, even from the very first; now that she has seen you, she will know that you won't disgrace her recommendation.'

A rapidly-suppressed smile at his wife's enthusiasm crossed Jenkins's face. He did not absolutely believe that Miss Montressor

had been captivated by her brief interview with him; but he secretly thought it by no means improbable that Miss Montressor would be glad to secure herself from any ill-timed allusion on his part to his extraordinary likeness to her very intimate friend Mr. Dolby, which might be embarrassing on this side the Atlantic, by facilitating his passage to the other; so that as his reflections on those Bess had reached the same result, he did not think it necessary to descant upon the divergence of their mental paths.

The desperate intentness of his wife's representations was seconded by Ephraim Jenkins's own conviction, and he became more and more serious as she pointed out how it must be known that Warren was being personated, since he was mixed up with the affairs of the Griswolds, and had been sent for in this emergency. She impressed upon her husband that his own danger of discovery could at best be delayed

only until, weary of getting no reply to their telegrams and letters, Mrs. Griswold's friends should send some one to Chicago, and their ambassador would instantly discover that Warren was not at that city. This final representation had more effect upon him than any of her foregoing arguments. It showed him that the bubble was close upon bursting, and immediately won him to obedience to her wishes.

After that their interview lasted only a few minutes. It was arranged that he should start for Chicago that night, and immediately on his arrival should telegraph, in reply to Mrs. Griswold's message, that Warren was absent when it arrived; that he should then make immediate preparations for his own departure, warning Warren by letter to London of his determination, and come away, bringing all the business papers with him for deposit at Warren's office. This done, he was again to see his wife, receive from her the promised funds, and sail for

England within a week, leaving Warren forewarned as far as lay in his power, but otherwise to get out of the Chicago scrape as well as he could.

It did not escape either Ephraim or his wife that there might be danger, supposing Warren should have returned to New York, of Eph's encountering him, which would have the double disadvantage of involving Ephraim in either the abandonment of his project of escape, or in a violent quarrel with his arbitrary brother. Mrs. Jenkins was much more disturbed when this possibility occurred to her mind; but recollecting that if Warren should be skulking about New York, he would be quite certain to avoid either his own offices or the steamer wharves, Eph would be safe from the risk of encounter, provided on his return he went to only those two places.

All this, and much more, having been hurriedly agreed upon between them, the husband and wife parted most affectionately,

and though with much distress, with a dawning of hope in both hearts, and a conviction on the part of Mrs. Jenkins that Ephraim had really and truly turned over a new leaf.

CHAPTER IV.

ESCAPED.

A FEW minutes after Ephraim Jenkins had left the house, and before his wife had checked her tears and resumed her composure sufficiently to present herself before Helen, Bryan Duval and Thornton Carey arrived. They were accompanied by two persons of grave exterior and formal manner, with that peculiar stamp upon them which distinguishes the police-officer, whether of Scotland-yard, or the Rue Jérusalem, or the Tombs; calm men, lean and inscrutable, to whom the atmosphere of crime and difficulty was air naturally breathed, and on which they throve in a not jubilant, but nevertheless satisfactory, sort of way.

'It gave me a dreadful turn, my dear,' said Mrs. Jenkins to Miss Montressor, 'when they came in. I was just crossing the hall and going up-stairs with baby, and I cannot tell you what a curious feeling it was, and how glad I was my Ephraim was out of the house.'

'Why, what on earth had your Ephraim been doing, that you should be afraid of two police-officers?' said Miss Montressor, who was not easily impressed by sentimental imaginations.

'He hadn't been doing anything,' returned her sister rather indignantly; 'but they had such an extraordinary manner about them, as though everything in the place belonged to them, and after they came in our souls were not our own, that I assure you I felt as if I had been doing something that I might be taken up for, and every one of the servants might have been stealing the plate, to judge by their looks. As for Annette, she disappeared alto-

gether. Mrs. Griswold wanted her to find some keys for her, and I had to go up-stairs and cause her to come out of her room, where she was double-locked in, as if there were a warrant out for her.'

'Silly French idiot!' said Miss Montressor parenthetically. 'I should rather like to have a look at these police-officers. I have seen our magistrates at home, you know, at least some of them—beaks, they call them — remarkably jolly and good-natured men, I thought.'

'Then, you see, you were not a prisoner, my dear,' said Mrs. Jenkins.

'Well, no more are you, nor any other people in the house. What a set of geese you all are!'

'You're so strong-minded, Clara; and it is uncomfortable, and always seems like bad luck somehow, when any of these people come about a quiet, well-conducted house.'

'Ah,' said Miss Montressor, with a very

genuine sigh, 'the bad luck has come in here before the police, not with them, and it will stay after them. Poor creature, how is she?'

'She received the gentlemen quite calm and quiet,' said Mrs. Jenkins; 'but of course I don't know anything, since I was only a minute in the room.'

This short dialogue took place in Helen's boudoir, whither Mrs. Jenkins had gone to seek her sister after she had ushered Helen's ominous visitors into her husband's library, where she was awaiting them. Miss Montressor had by this time awakened from her nap, greatly refreshed and reinvigorated, and was looking very dainty and captivating; she had arranged her hair by the aid of a pocket-comb and a pocket-mirror which invariably accompanied her, together with a cunningly-devised little casket containing pearl-powder, to the use of which, to say the truth, she was too much addicted off the stage; and she was now perfectly prepared

to undergo a whole set of new sensations with regard to the Griswold murder, for in that familiar phrase had the at-first-vague calamity ranged itself in the minds of Miss Montressor and Bryan Duval.

The interview between Helen Griswold, her two friends, and the police-officers lasted so long, that the grievous apprehension possessed Mrs. Jenkins as to the effect which such sustained interrogation, with all its horrors of assumption and actual pain, must produce on Helen's enfeebled frame. To the acute and experienced eye of Mrs. Jenkins, who had done a great deal in the way of nursing invalids in her time, and who had that quick perception of illness natural to woman, however uneducated, Helen's health had suffered much more severely under the excruciating trial of the last three days than Thornton Carey or Bryan Duval believed. In her very composure Mrs. Jenkins saw partly an unnatural effort and partly physical exhaustion; she

did not cry, or scream, or throw herself about, or give way to any violent demonstration of the suffering which was racking her, quite as much because she was unable to do so, as because her good sense and her resolution induced her to give as little trouble and inflict as little distress upon the friends who were nobly endeavouring to aid her as possible; but they perceived only one of these reasons for her quietude.

In voice, that most distinctive symptom, as well as in face, Helen Griswold was changed; something was gone from both destined never to return to them: the sweet clear *timbre* in the former, the roundlike brightness in the latter. In after years Helen was a handsomer woman than she had been in those days of honoured and happy matronhood, in her splendid home with the husband who was so devoted to her; but the beauty of these latter years was of a different cast from that in which he had taken such delight, and it indicated

a mind matured and a heart strengthened, both results reached by a process of untold severity.

That Helen would be very ill, so seriously ill that she would be unable to think of anything except her bodily ailments for some time after the immediate pressure of the actual business imposed upon her by her calamity should have been removed, Mrs. Jenkins felt thoroughly convinced, and therefore she was anxious that all the business which could be got through to-day should be got through; and as the time went on, and no sound of departing footsteps could be heard passing the door from the boudoir, where she and Miss Montressor remained, she was satisfied that they were going into all the matters connected with Mr. Griswold's affairs within Helen's sphere of knowledge thoroughly and at once.

In this supposition Mrs. Jenkins was perfectly correct. It had been agreed be-

tween Bryan Duval and Thornton Carey that all the information which could possibly be extracted from Mrs. Griswold should be acquired on the present occasion; so that, if possible, she should not again be troubled with the distressing presence of the judicial side of the dreadful occurrence, but left to the tranquillising effect of time and quiet.

So, when the four men were ushered into the presence of the young widow, who received them in her husband's library, to enter which and meddle with the papers to which she had never had, during his lifetime, any access, gave her a pang of exceeding sharpness, they found her, as Mrs. Jenkins had described her to her sister at an earlier hour in the morning, very calm, but mortally pale.

Throughout the whole of that prolonged interview, under all the forms interrogative, retrospective, speculative, and narrative which it assumed, no change fell upon

Helen's face, no tinge of colour touched its waxen paleness; she was perfectly collected, and her natural quickness of apprehension was entirely unimpeded, but her eyes had a fixed vagueness and lightness, produced by overwhelming fatigue and the influence of opiate. Her mechanical, unexcited manner, and patient waiting and submission to the question-and-answer mood adopted by her interlocutors, assisted them materially, and caused them no little astonishment. A woman who always gave the exact answer to the exact question, and never required to have it asked twice, was a novelty in their experience; and as the examination, including in it all the circumstances which had preceded Alston Griswold's departure, progressed, it was plain that unless they could find a clue in the information which they were receiving from Mrs. Griswold, that clue must be sought for in a totally different set and combination of circumstances, for there could be

no doubt of the retentiveness and accuracy of her memory and the unembarrassed plainness of her statement of facts.

Copious notes were taken of her narrative of everything which had occurred up to the eve of Alston Griswold's departure. She was closely questioned as to his and her own social relations. Her statements on that point were few and simple. She and her husband had a large acquaintance but few friends, in the sense of habitual daily intimates. It was not her taste to cultivate such, and Mr. Griswold, though a man of very genial disposition, was almost as reserved and home-loving as an Englishman; she could, in fact, indicate but one intimacy on her husband's part of the nature and extent which the questions put to her indicated—this intimacy existed in the person of Trenton Warren.

At this point in Helen's statement Thornton Carey informed her for the first time of the steps that had been taken in

order to procure Trenton Warren's attendance at New York, and his intervention in the efforts which they were making to obtain a clue to the perpetrators of the crime.

She had almost forgotten him, until the questions of the police-officers respecting the daily habits and associates of her husband had recalled him to her mind; the recollection arose even while she was speaking of him, with a dreary wonder that a few days ago a complication in her domestic history caused by him should have seemed so serious, and have been struck into absolute nullity by the undreaded calamity that had come to teach her how far facts might outweigh fancies in terror and in pain. While the men were speaking to her, asking her questions, to which she was giving almost mechanical answers, her mind was busy with that interview between herself and Trenton Warren, which now seemed hundreds of years old, and of infinite un-

importance; and she had suffered it to worry her, she had thought about it and let it interfere with the frankness and brightness of her very last communications with the husband who was never to know a thought or word of hers more.

How she hated her folly, but doubly she hated the man who had inspired it! What did it matter now—what could it really have mattered then? Had she not allowed a chimera to take possession of her mind, to intervene between her and that full confidence, that full acquiescence, in every wish of Alston's that was due to him? Then Helen's good sense told her that she must not allow feelings of this kind to intrude just at present; that she was not in a fit state to disentangle the real from the imaginary, or to weigh with the scrupulous exactitude which it deserved the influence that that interview had had upon her recent life. Then she said simply, in reply to Thornton Carey's communication

with regard to the telegram, 'I suppose he has arrived ?'

'No, he has not,' said Carey; 'and that forms one of the difficulties in our way of proceeding just at present, besides constituting a very vexatious delay in the information, which we hoped to have completed by this time for transmission to Liverpool.'

'Where is he, then ?'

'We don't know.'

'In what terms did he answer the telegram?'

'We have received no answer, and this puzzles us extremely.'

'Would you mind telling me,' asked Helen, 'in what words you put your message?'

Thornton Carey took out his pocket-book, and read a memorandum of the exact form of his despatch to Trenton Warren at Chicago.

Helen repeated it slowly, and then said, 'I am not so surprised at your receiving no

answer. It is best, gentlemen, though this is a matter which cannot possibly have any bearing upon the subject into which you are inquiring, that I should tell you at once, in justice to Mr. Warren, who would otherwise seem to have acted a strange part with regard to so intimate a friend as my Alston, that he did not extend his friendship to me, and that Mr. Warren and I are not at present on good terms. I therefore think it very likely that your having sent the message in my name has occasioned him to take no notice of it. He would not associate it with Alston, because he is in direct communication, as he believes, with him, whereas he knows that I have not been; so he would naturally suppose that any news affecting him in any way would have been transmitted direct to Chicago, and therefore his mind would be quite easy with regard to anything which might have occurred here.'

Thornton Carey and Bryan Duval ex-

changed looks. They admired the candour and the courage of this woman, who thus told a fact which might naturally excite grave suspicions, in the minds of the two officers in her presence, grave suspicions of her own loyalty to her dead husband, by the admission that, so far as this man's intimate friendship was concerned, there had been a decided division of interest between them.

The police-officers also exchanged looks, and probably each understood the meaning of that of the other—they were not identical with those of the two gentlemen. In that moment Helen Griswold put the end of the thread into the hands of Justice; the ball was a long way off, and hidden in some windings of the mass, but the way to it would be found by that hint.

'I think, gentlemen,' continued Helen, 'that if you believe Mr. Warren's presence at New York to be indispensable to your arriving at a true comprehension of my

husband's affairs, you had better telegraph to him again in the name of the police authorities.'

The two men bowed acquiescence.

'And tell him in the message quite distinctly what it is that has occurred.'

'Certainly, Helen,' said Thornton Carey; 'this shall be done at once. If you had been able to hear that I had already telegraphed for Warren, or that I had anticipated any delay in his reply, I would have told you, and thus a great many hours would have been saved. If I telegraph immediately, at what hour could he leave Chicago, do you know?' he said, addressing one of the police-officers.

'If he left to-night,' was the reply, 'we could not possibly see him until Saturday morning. You must send your message at once, Mr. Carey, and make it as pressing, conclusive, and indeed imperative, as may be.'

'That's a long and serious delay,' said

Bryan Duval. 'At what hour on Saturday does the steamer sail for England?'

'It will be late next Saturday,' said Thornton; 'the tide doesn't serve till five.'

'Lots of time,' returned Bryan Duval cheerfully. 'We shall have Mr. Warren here in the middle of Friday night, interview him on Saturday morning, and send our man by the mail.'

'Sharp practice, Mr. Duval,' said the police-officer who had spoken before, 'but quite within possibility, provided Mr. Warren can put us on the track so unerringly as it looks like.'

'Then, as it is clear that nothing more can be settled at present,' said Thornton Carey, rising from his seat and approaching Helen, whose hand he took gently in his own, 'I think, dear Helen, we may now release you. You have told us everything which you can tell; you have given us all the papers which poor Alston left here. Your immediate concern with our wretched

business has come to an end; we will leave you to rest and peace.'

'Peace!' she interrupted, but her face was still unchanged, and no tears came to refresh the dimness of her black eyes.

Bryan Duval and the two police-officers rose.

'Have you any further suggestion to make, madam?' asked the one who had already spoken.

'No,' she replied faintly.

'Perhaps you will allow me to make one?' he continued.

She bowed acquiescence.

'Though your husband's letters from London have been, as you have explained to us, entirely free from any allusion to business, they may have contained indications which would escape your notice, but which may be of much utility in our researches. Have you any objection to confide them to us, in addition to the business papers you have already given us?'

A large packet tied up with red tape lay on the table by the speaker's elbow.

'I have not the slightest objection,' returned Helen. 'Every word he wrote to me from England was, like himself, generous and affectionate, and I cannot conceive that any such traces as you allude to exist in them, but I will put neither my judgment nor my will against your experience. Thornton, will you kindly ring for Annette?'

In reply to the summons Annette made her appearance, with a scared expression of countenance and a tight hold of her skirts. She glanced askance and fearful at the harmless-looking gentlemen, who were standing bolt upright in front of her mistress's chair, and received in silence Mrs. Griswold's order to bring her a certain green-morocco casket which stood upon the little shelf at her bedside.

Silence was maintained during the few moments of Annette's absence.

She presently returned, and placed the casket on the table before Mrs. Griswold, who opened it and took out a large packet of letters, carefully arranged according to the date of their receipt, and tied with pink ribbon.

'They are all there,' she said sadly, as she handed the packet to Thornton Carey. 'I placed the last there on the day I expected to hear from him again—I little thought that story was true.' Still her face was unchanged and her eyes were tearless.

The quick eye of the police-officer had seen another object lying at the bottom of the box from which Mrs. Griswold had taken her husband's letters. It was a prettily-bound and gilt manuscript-book, with a lock, indorsed in gold letters, 'My Journal.'

'I beg your pardon,' he said, advancing and laying his hand upon the open box, as Helen stretched out hers for the purpose of closing it; 'may I ask if this journal is yours?'

'It is,' she replied simply; 'it is my journal since the day of my husband's departure, kept at his request, written up for transmission to him by every mail, and copied into this book.'

'Madam,' said the police-officer, 'I have a difficulty in expressing the wish that you should confide this journal, not indeed to us, but to your friends. The smallest and most unexpected particular of the occurrences of your life and household at home may aid in this investigation. We are at present all abroad, and we must neglect no source of information within our reach. May I ask if you have recorded visits made to you, letters received by you, and any reports or impressions in any way connected with Mr. Griswold's business, of which he unfortunately kept you in ignorance, which may have reached you during his absence?'

'I do not think so,' said Helen. 'I know it is very full of gossiping and trivial

things, as well as of the daily occupations of my life; but such as it is, Mr. Carey and Mr. Bryan Duval are perfectly at liberty to read it, and, indeed, you gentlemen also, should you think it well to do so. I had but a simple story to tell, and I have told it simply.'

With the same gentleness, the same mechanical steadiness that had marked her conduct throughout, Helen removed the manuscript-book from the box, and handed it, not to Thornton Carey, but to Bryan Duval, who received it from her hands in silence and with a bow. He was infinitely touched by the whole scene, and by the almost solemn simplicity of the young widow.

As had been arranged on their way, the two police-officers now took leave of Mrs. Griswold, Thornton Carey and Bryan Duval remaining with her for a few minutes after their departure. On leaving her they were to go direct to the telegraph-office, to send

the despatch in the terms agreed upon to Trenton Warren.

'I fear you are extremely exhausted,' said Thornton Carey, when he and Duval remained alone with Helen. 'This has been a most trying ordeal for you; but I trust it will be the last.'

'There will be no need for my seeing Mr. Warren, will there?' said Helen, in a low voice, her face for the first time changing and assuming an expression of deep distress and anxiety. 'O Thornton, keep that from me if you can!'

'I don't foresee that there will be any necessity at all for your seeing him,' returned Thornton, 'if it is repugnant and unpleasant for you to do so; and I need not say that we will make every effort to extract such full information from him as to enable us to act without any further reference either of him or ourselves to you. You know that well, Helen, and therefore you will be prepared, in case we should find it in-

dispensable to bring him in contact with you, to acquiesce in the necessity—will you not?'

'Of course I will. I have only asked you to spare if possible, and "if possible" means not at the expense of avenging my Alston. I will bear anything for that purpose, and few things could be more painful to me than an interview with Trenton Warren.'

'I think I know why,' was Mr. Duval's comment upon her words and her expression, spoken inwardly of course, and with the additional reflection that he had known few stronger situations, with more to be made out of them, than the present.

'What are you going to do for the rest of the day?' said Thornton Carey. 'Are you going to try to sleep?'

'No,' she replied; 'I have had enough of unnatural sleep, and natural sleep won't come to me just yet. I am going to see my child for a while, as long as I can bear it, and Miss Montressor has been good enough to promise to come to me.'

'Clara is a good soul,' said Bryan Duval parenthetically and heartily. 'Is she here now?'

'I think so,' said Mrs. Griswold. 'She promised Mrs. Jenkins that she would come early, and I fear that she has been detained. Now that this morning's work is over, you will not object, will you, Thornton,' she said, raising her eyes to him with a look of dependence and submission, from which he shrunk, so full was it of her helplessness and her pain, 'that I should take to her who saw my Alston last? Do you know, Mr. Duval,' she continued, turning to the actor, and producing the same effect upon him by that infinitely pathetic look, 'I have been thinking that the very last person to whom he ever spoke a friendly word must have been Miss Montressor or yourself—I wonder which it was?'

'I don't remember, my dear Mrs. Griswold,' said Bryan, 'but I have no doubt she will; women have fine memories for these

small points, which sometimes are of so much importance in their world of feeling. I don't doubt that you will find hers faultless, and I am sure no friend of yours will object to your talking it out now with this kind creature, who feels for you, as I can bear witness, more than I thought it was in her to feel. You have been very good and wonderfully composed hitherto, and I confess I should not be sorry to hear that you had given way to your feelings, and that all this composure was broken up for a while at least. So Carey and I will go and work for you and do our very best, and you must try and put this part of it out of your mind for the present, knowing that you will not be disturbed or called upon again unless it is a very desperate necessity indeed, and Clara Montressor shall come and talk to you about your husband, and go over every word he said to her; and, if I remember her account of it right, there were few of them that were not about yourself.' With

these words he raised her hand respectfully to his lips, turned on his heel and left the room, buttoning his tight-fitting frock-coat over the flat manuscript volume which she had confided to him.

He had stood in the corridor little more than a minute when Thornton Carey joined him. They went down-stairs and out of the house without exchanging a word; but when they had reached the street, they fell into close consultation, and walked away towards the telegraph station arm in arm.

From her long interview with Helen Griswold, which came to an end barely in time to enable Miss Montressor to get back to the hotel for dinner, that kind-hearted celebrity returned very deeply affected. The simplicity of Helen's life and mind, the quiet and matter-of-course devotion to her duties, and her great courage and submission in her trouble, affected the actress strangely, giving her glimpses of realities in life and heroism in character to be found in every-

day spheres and commonplace actions of which she had entertained no previous conception.

She and Bryan Duval had a long talk that night after the performance at the Varieties about Helen Griswold. In the interval Bryan Duval had peeped into the pages of the manuscript volume which she had confided to him, but which, together with the letters written by Alston Griswold to his wife during his residence in England, it had been arranged was to be formally examined by himself and Thornton Carey on the following day.

Until the arrival of Trenton Warren this was all that could be done, and neither Duval nor Carey cared to meet before the appointed time. The delay was trying them a good deal, and though their expectations of success in ultimately bringing the murderer to justice were not affected by it, they both felt considerable weariness and strong inclination to be alone. This did

not, however, interfere with the curiosity with which Bryan Duval heard Miss Montressor's account of the hours which she had passed with Helen Griswold. Bryan Duval was accustomed to reading between the lines; he had read between the lines of Helen's innocent, unsophisticated, and perfectly sincere record of her life under its past and its present aspects, and he had formed a theory of her mind, conduct, and future singularly near the truth, though he believed implicitly that she was entirely unconscious that any such indications as he had extracted from it were contained in the simple annals of her girlhood and her married life, which had been continued in her journal literally up to the day of its unconscious close.

On this point he said not one word to Miss Montressor, nor did he then confide to Thornton Carey even the last of his impressions of Helen's journal when they came to discuss it. He bestowed many words of

good-humoured approval upon the actress for her womanly kindness and sympathy with Mrs. Griswold, and when they parted, Miss Montressor carried away with her a not unpleasant impression that Bryan Duval entertained rather a higher opinion of her as an individual than he had previously done; an impression which was perfectly well founded, and had arisen quite as much to the surprise as to the pleasure of Mr. Duval, who entertained but a low estimate of human nature in general, and was much too philosophical to exclude the types with which he was most familiar and most closely allied.

Thornton Carey had gone straight home after the despatch of the telegram, which, as agreed upon, he had couched in most decisive words and supported with the authority of emanation from the police magnates. He strove hard to turn his mind away from the subject of his grave preoccupation during the evening, reading resolutely on one of his

old lines of study, and resolved to rest his faculties thoroughly in order to recommence his work upon the morrow with brightness and efficiency.

Most of the visitors to the hotel in which he was staying had breakfasted before he came down to the dining-room, only a few almost as belated as himself were finishing their meal. He stopped in the hall as usual, and bought his morning supply of journalistic literature, and having seated himself and called for his coffee, he turned the pages of the *New York Herald* with but languid interest, which, however, was changed into vehement excitement by the very first announcement in the long list of latest intelligences which met his eye, stated in the largest capitals, and with all the emblems which indicate the record of a great disaster.

Twenty minutes later, Thornton Carey was at Helen Griswold's door, which was

opened to him as usual by the faithful Jim, to whose astonishment Mr. Carey addressed to him, instead of his ordinary inquiry as to the condition of Mrs. Griswold, the abrupt question, 'Have any newspapers come to-day?'

'They have come, sir,' said Jim; 'I have got them here.'

'Has Mrs. Griswold seen them?'

'No, sir; no paper has been taken up to her room these two days. There is no more news of Mr. Griswold, is there? They haven't caught those villains?'

'Good heavens, no; if they had I should want her to see the papers, not to have them kept from her. Give me that one out of your hand, Jim'—it was also a copy of the *Herald*—'and go up-stairs at once, see if Mrs. Griswold is up, and say I beg her most particularly to see me.'

Jim obeyed with alacrity, and Thornton Carey followed him closely up the long staircase, halting only in the corridor

which led to Helen's room. It was her voice that replied to Jim's knock, bidding him come in, and he heard her say, in reply to the servant's inquiry, 'Mr. Carey? I thought it was understood he would not require to see me to-day. Something new must have happened. Show him in at once.'

Helen met him almost at the door, and immediately accosted him. 'What have you come to tell me, Thornton? Do not be afraid; my child is saved,' she laid her hand upon the snow-white curtains of the bassinet in which the infant was sleeping as she spoke, ' and my husband is gone. Fate can hardly harm me sorely any more. Come in and tell me at once.'

Thornton followed her into the room, and noticed that Mrs. Jenkins was busy at the dressing-table with some little matters of the child's toilet. Helen had been up early, was fully dressed, and about to breakfast in her dressing-room. She looked bet-

ter than on the previous day, and before Thornton answered her eager questions, he insisted upon knowing what sort of night she had passed, and whether she had taken a proper quantity of food.

These questions he put to Mrs. Jenkins, who answered both satisfactorily. 'Come, come,' said Helen, interrupting and remonstrating, 'you have something to say. Again I ask you tell me at once—what is it? Does Mr. Warren refuse to assist us, even when he is not asked by me? Is he so false to his friendship with Alston, or does he carry his resentment into refusing to aid in punishing his murderer?'

She seated herself on a small sofa by the fireplace, and pointed to the chair near her, which Thornton Carey took. As they were now placed, she faced the dressing-table at which Mrs. Jenkins was engaged, the child's cradle was on her right hand, the chair occupied by Thornton Carey on her left.

Mrs. Jenkins paused slightly in her occupation, and asked, 'Shall I leave the room?'

'Certainly not,' replied Helen. 'I have no secrets from you.'

'Pray do not go, Mrs. Jenkins,' said Thornton earnestly: he infinitely dreaded the effect of the news he had come to tell Helen Griswold, and eagerly caught at the chance of that efficient person's presence in case she should be quite overcome by it. 'The fact is, my dear Helen,' he went on, glancing at Mrs. Jenkins, and by a stealthy gesture of his hand drawing her attention to what he was about to say, and her vigilance for Helen, 'an unexpected obstacle to our thorough investigation of Griswold's affairs has arisen. It comes, as you have divined so quickly, from Chicago.'

At the mention of the word Mrs. Jenkins started irrepressibly, came a step or two forward, holding some toilet article

unconsciously in her hand, and in evident undisguised suspense upon Thornton Carey's words.

'The newspapers too,' he went on, 'contain intelligence of an accident upon the railway between New York and Chicago. We had no reason to suppose that Trenton Warren had left Chicago, or was either at New York or in the vicinity at any time within several weeks, but it may have been so, and his absence from Chicago would account otherwise than as you accounted for it, for his having returned no answer to our first telegram. Whatever may have been the cause, there is no doubt that he was in the train to which this serious accident occurred last night on his way from New York to Chicago. I regret to tell you that the accident was a very serious one, and that among the list of passengers killed is the name of Trenton Warren.

'This is another blow for you, my dear

Helen,' he continued, as she sank back in her chair, and clasped her hands.

But at that instant Mrs. Jenkins sprang towards him with a piercing scream, and crying out, 'No, no! for me—for me!' fell down senseless at Helen's feet.

CHAPTER V.

A CLUE.

It was Thornton Carey who darted forward, and kneeling by Mrs. Jenkins's prostrate form, endeavoured, in the helpless manner which all men employ under similar circumstances, to restore animation by raising her head and chafing her hands; for Helen, overcome by the suddenness of the nurse's attack, at first sat motionless in her chair. After a moment all her womanly readiness and sympathy returned to her, and having summoned Annette to her aid, they lifted Mrs. Jenkins on to an adjacent sofa and busied themselves in their work of restoration. Not that the French waiting-maid was of much use as an assistant; she

seemed to think that the seizure of Mrs. Jenkins, on whose clear-headedness and promptness of action the whole household had been for the last few days reliant, was the climax to the family misfortune; and she wrung her hands and beat her breast and *Mon Dieu*'d in a manner which, under other circumstances, would have been extremely irritating. But Helen was busily engaged in gently bathing the sufferer's head with eau de Cologne, and paid no attention to the waiting-maid's lamentations; while Thornton Carey, who had a keen sense of delicacy, had retired to the window, where, while apparently gazing with great interest into the street, he was drumming with his fingers on the glass, and endeavouring to arrive at an elucidation of the scene which had just passed before his eyes.

'For me—for me!' this strange woman had cried out just before she sank upon the floor; her meaning, taken with the context of what had passed before, being that the

death of Trenton Warren, which had just been announced, was as a blow, not to Helen, but to her. Who was she, this mysterious woman, who had of late assumed so important a position in the household, from whom, as Helen herself allowed, she had received so much affectionate assistance, and in whom she seemed so thoroughly to confide? She had even been, to a certain extent, admitted into the secret of their hopes and fears and their method of procedure in attempting to detect poor Alston's assassins; Helen had vouched for her fidelity, and, notwithstanding the sympathy of all the household, had declared that in this nurse alone could she place reliance. What had been her antecedents? It was as likely as not that Helen, in her trusting girlish way, had taken the woman without any proper references, simply because her face or manner pleased her, and had suffered herself to be beguiled by an assumed sympathy and a smooth tongue. Who could the woman be,

and what could be her motive for introducing herself into that quiet home? That she knew Warren was clear—she herself had made it clear by this recent betrayal of her feelings. What could Trenton be to her that she should fall senseless at the news of his death? In the position which Warren occupied with regard to the murdered man, Helen's friends were more deeply interested in him than in any other person in the world; and now he was dead, and here was this woman, usually so calm and collected, unable to refrain from showing signs of violent grief at the news. Could it be possible — and Thornton Carey's cheeks tingled at the mere thought—that this woman had been some former mistress of Warren's, and that he had taken advantage of his intimacy with Griswold to obtain for her a comfortable place in his friend's household? No. Thornton Carey knew little of Warren, but all that he heard of him went to contradict such an idea; a man so gen-

erally represented as cold, impassive, and even more immersed in the accumulated cares of business than Griswold himself; there must be some other explanation of the mystery, but what it was Thornton Carey could not at the moment attempt to define. He began to find himself wishing that he had brought Bryan Duval with him to the house; for that gentleman's ready acuteness had made a great impression on Thornton Carey's mind, and he felt half inclined to start off at once and lay before his friend this newest phase in the mystery which they were endeavouring jointly to penetrate. It was absolutely necessary that some explanation should be given, and he thought he would say as much to Helen, whom he saw crossing the room to speak to him.

'She's a little better now,' murmured Helen, as she approached; 'she has regained her consciousness, but her heart is still beating wildly, and she has once or twice

made an effort to speak, though her physical strength seems scarcely sufficient to admit of her doing so. What an extremely sudden seizure, was it not?'

'So sudden and so extraordinary, my dear Helen,' said Thornton Carey impressively, 'that I am eagerly desirous of having it accounted for; and even at the risk of somewhat tasking this woman's strength, I shall ask her to explain it as soon as possible.'

'You imagine, then, as I do,' said Helen, 'that it was her hearing the news of the accident which has happened to Mr. Warren that caused her to faint?'

'That and nothing else,' said Carey bluntly. 'Had you any idea that she was acquainted with Warren? Has she ever mentioned his name, or referred to him in any way? More than that, can you recollect whether she has ever shown any emotion when his name has been alluded to in her presence?'

'I had no idea that she was even aware of his existence,' said Helen. 'She came to me since poor Alston's departure, and in this house, at least, I am certain she has never set eyes upon Mr. Warren.'

'It is essential for the purposes of our investigation that we should know exactly what her relations with Warren are or were; and under your approval I purpose asking her a few questions.'

'You will not be hard upon her, Thornton?' said Helen, looking up at him. 'You will remember that the woman is poor and ill, and has already suffered a good deal from the loss of her own child—you will think of these things when you speak to her, I am sure?'

'You may rely upon my discretion,' said Thornton Carey. 'I only want to come at the truth, and I will evolve that in the gentlest manner possible.'

'Mrs. Jenkins is better,' said Annette, crossing the room from the side of the couch

where she had been standing, 'and would wish to speak to madame.'

'Now is your opportunity, Thornton,' whispered Helen to him. 'Come with me.'

Mrs. Jenkins, who had raised herself to a sitting posture on the couch, was perfectly pale; there was a tremulous motion in her lips and a nervous wandering of her hands, which showed that she had not yet got over the recent shock; but she did her utmost to nerve herself as Mrs. Griswold approached her, and her eyes, as they rested on her benefactress, had a soft and imploring expression.

'Annette tells me you are better, nurse, and that you want to speak to me,' said Helen, laying a kind light touch upon the patient's arm. 'You, however, scarcely yet seem to be yourself, and if there is anything in what you have to say calculated to excite you, perhaps it would be better to defer it until you are a little stronger.'

'What I have to say, dear madam,' said

Mrs. Jenkins, in a low and feeble voice, 'ought, in the interests of truth and justice, to be told at once; the longer it is kept to myself the longer I shall feel myself guilty of gross deception to you, who have been so kind and good to me.'

'Deception, nurse?'

'Deception, I am afraid, it must be called, dear madam; not that I have myself actually deceived you, or that I would allow anybody connected with me to do so; but that certain things have been going on in which you were to some extent interested with which I was acquainted, and which I have kept from your knowledge.'

'I am perfectly certain,' said Helen, in her calm sweet voice, 'that you have knowingly done me no harm; I am perfectly certain, from the attention and devotion which you have shown to me since you have been in this house, that if you could have stood between me and harm's way, you would have done so. If, however, there is any-

thing on your mind which it will render you easier to get rid of, if you think to clear your conscience by telling us—for this gentleman, Mr. Carey, is entirely in my confidence—anything which you think it behoves me to know, speak at once.'

'You are right in saying that there is nothing I would not do to shield you from harm, dear madam,' said Mrs. Jenkins, touching Helen's hand with her wan lips. 'The intrigue in which I was passively mixed up was arranged before I entered your house, and it is only within the last few minutes—when I fainted, in fact—it flashed upon me that the affair could possibly have any connection with your present dreadful sorrow.'

At these words Thornton Carey started, and bent forward his head to listen more attentively.

'Well, when you first engaged me to come to you,' said Mrs. Jenkins, 'you took for granted that I was respectable all

through, and I hadn't courage enough to avow the truth. I ought to have said who and what my husband was and where he was then living. I should, but that he—but that I—but that there had been something against him. Not that he was not loving and good to me, and always had been, understand that, but he got into trouble when he was a young man, and the memory of that seems to have stuck to him, and respectable people were consequently unwilling to give him employment, and he was thus forced to do what he could, often what he hated, to gain a bare subsistence.

'The knowledge of this sin of his early youth,' she continued, 'was not confined to me. I shared it with his only brother, a man exactly resembling him in size, feature, and complexion, but who has risen in the world, while my poor Ephraim has sunk, and who made use of the knowledge of the cloud hanging over Ephraim's head to employ him as his agent in all kinds of dirty

work in which he did not choose himself to appear. My husband was known as Ephraim Jenkins, but his brother of whom I speak, who has wrought upon us all this woe, and through whom indirectly, if all I believe is true, I am now a widow indeed, is called Trenton Warren.'

'Trenton Warren!' cried Carey.

Helen said no word, but sat with her eyes distended and fixed upon the speaker.

'Trenton Warren,' repeated Mrs. Jenkins; 'the man whom you now suppose to be dead, but who, I fear, has been left for the commission of still further crime, being, as I know him to be, the wickedest man on the face of the earth. Listen. Some months ago now, Trenton Warren sent for Ephraim, my husband, who was always at his brother's beck and call, and had to do whatever he was told; this time he was desired not to go to his brother's office as usual, but to name some place where Warren was not likely to be recognised. They

met, and Warren developed his scheme to Ephraim, not then or by word of mouth, but in a letter of instructions which he handed to him, and told him to read afterwards. The main point in these instructions was this. I have told you that the two brothers were exactly alike, so much so that it was impossible for those who knew them best to distinguish between them. I don't suppose it had often been much noticed, for Trenton Warren was always well-dressed, and my poor Ephraim was scarcely ever out of rags; but Warren knew of the likeness, and admitted it, and determined to use it to serve his purpose; and the main point of the instructions was this: that Ephraim was to personate his brother; that he was to have plenty of money and live like a gentleman, and, in fact, to pass himself off as Trenton Warren down at Chicago.'

'At Chicago!' cried Thornton Carey, springing up from his chair, Helen still preserving a stony silence.

'Stay,' said Mrs. Jenkins, lifting her hand in supplication; 'stay and hear me out. It was wicked, I know, but what were we to do, we were near starving then? And besides, Trenton Warren knew the hold that he had over Ephraim, and would have exercised it had there been the slightest attempt to thwart him. What his motive for this duplicity may have been, I know not, except that, being a motive of Trenton Warren's, it was sure to be a bad one.'

'It was your husband, then, who was at Chicago, and not Trenton Warren?' said Thornton Carey. 'The information which I received at his office as to his being at Chicago was, then, false?'

'As to his being at Chicago, certainly, said Mrs. Jenkins; 'for part of the time at least he has been in England, and not in Chicago, for my poor Ephraim told me so.'

'In England!' cried Helen, speaking for the first time.

'Yes, dear madam; my poor Ephraim

was here yesterday; he had come up from Chicago in great trouble, in consequence of not having heard from his brother, and also fearing that the telegram which Mr. Carey addressed to Mr. Warren was really meant for him, and imagining that I was ill; and I had a long talk with him here in this very house; and I told him that come what might he must break with this horrible connection, and assert himself, and turn over a new leaf, and live like an honest man in the future. He said, at first, it was impossible; but I told him we should find friends to help us; above all, you, my dear madam, who have been so kind to me. And then he seemed to be convinced, and he told me he would do all I asked him, and he left me with the intention of becoming a reformed man; and now he is dead—for I am sure it was he who was killed on the railway, and not Trenton Warren—he is dead, and I shall never see him more.'

While Mrs. Jenkins was concluding this

speech, Helen had been writing with a pencil on a slip of paper. As the poor woman finished speaking she burst into a flood of tears, and seemed so thoroughly overcome that Helen judged it better that Thornton Carey should leave the room; and Helen motioned him to do so. As he passed by her, she placed in his hand the paper on which she had been writing. Immediately on gaining the library he opened it, and read these words: 'As sure as God is in heaven, Trenton Warren is the man who has murdered my husband.'

Thornton Carey read the paper, but made no comment on its contents. His mind was too full to find any utterance just then; he too, as he had listened to Mrs. Jenkins's narrative, had become impressed with the idea that Trenton Warren might in some way be mixed up with the terrible matter to the discovery of which he had pledged himself. But he was a man; and

one, moreover, with a calm judicial mind, accustomed to weigh matters with deliberation, and not to leap hastily at conclusions. He passed out of the room, and out of the house; he thought it better not to allow himself the chance of any farther discussion of the subject with Helen until he had fully thought it out by himself. That was Thornton Carey's great secret of work; he held that there was no problem so knotty that it could not finally be 'thought out' if due time were given to the process. Education and circumstances had made him self-reliant; and he believed that in most instances more could be done by his own unaided wits, when duly applied to the solution of a difficulty, than by a discussion with others, in which the proposition of various schemes would tend to divert the mind from the due consideration of any explanation, no matter how striking or original.

Out of the house he went, then, and on descending the stoop, instead of going down

town as usual, he turned sharply to his left, and walked away up Fifth-avenue at a swinging pace. Just at that time of day the avenue was alive with people, some in search of pleasure, some in search of health, who had come out to enjoy the soft mild weather, and on foot and on horseback, in buggies, coupés, and open carriages were making their way to Central Park. Scarcely one of these persons but was attracted by the tall slight figure of the young man, who hurried along with seven-league stride among them, but not of them, evidently enwrapt in his own cogitation. The valetudinarians envied his free step and the ease with which he carried himself; the pleasure-seekers made their little jokes to each other about him as a philosopher, a student, an eccentric, perhaps a madman. Thornton Carey heard none of their remarks, and if he had, he would not have heeded them. He did not see the people who whirled by him in carriages; he was

scarcely aware of the presence of those whose coat-sleeves he brushed in his onward flight. While the human hive was still buzzing around him, he could not give himself up to the luxury of untrammelled thought; with all this whirling of wheels and clacking of horses' hoofs sounding in his ears, he could not concentrate his mind upon working out the problem which he had set himself. When once he found himself within the limits of the Central Park, he turned rapidly out of the fashionable promenade, and striking across a green expanse, dived into a shrubbery, the narrow path through which was entirely deserted; and there, unseen and alone, Thornton Carey, walking up and down, commenced his self-appointed task of 'thinking it out.'

Could it be possible, in the exercise of that woman's instinct which, without any possibility of explanation, without any apparent rhyme or reason, is so often exactly correct, that Helen Griswold had hit

upon the truth when she stated that Trenton Warren was the murderer of her husband? He, Thornton Carey, must allow that some faint suspicion had been engendered in his mind as Mrs. Jenkins's narrative proceeded; but now was the time for him to sift and winnow the evidence which it contained, and to come to his own straightforward conclusion. In the first place, was the woman speaking the truth? He thought that might be clearly answered in the affirmative. She was under obligations to Helen, of whom she professed to be very fond, to whom indeed she had previously shown a certain amount of fidelity and devotion, and there was an air of veracity about her which, to him, was convincing. The facts which she narrated she had received from her husband; and then the question arose, was he to be believed? This was plainly a very different matter. According to his wife's own showing, he had been early in life mixed up in

some dishonest transactions, the memory of which clung to him in after years, and prevented his getting respectable employment. Would not such a man, tabooed, disgraced, kept down by his own brother, in order that he might use him for an instrument in his dirty work—would not such a man be likely to tell lies for his own advantage? Granted; but what advantage had he in this instance? He and his wife were one; she was his confidante; she knew the power which his brother held over him; why then should he attempt to deceive her in the way in which that power was exercised? No; upon a clear review of all the circumstances, Thornton Carey was compelled to admit that the story told by Mrs. Jenkins was probably true, and that while Jenkins was personating him at Chicago, Trenton Warren had gone to London.

He would have been in England, then, at the time of the murder: so far, that was in favour of Helen's hypothesis. It agreed,

too, with the idea proclaimed with so much earnestness by Bryan Duval, that the necessity for the crime had originated in New York and not in England. The question of motive was, however, above all others, the one which would require to be clearly and calmly examined, and Bryan Duval, with his leanings towards the picturesque and the dramatic, was, Thornton Carey thought, hardly the man to decide upon it. If Warren had taken advantage of the confidence reposed in him by Alston Griswold to pillage his friend to any considerable extent, if he, on his own account, had been engaged in any schemes or speculations in direct opposition to those in which he was ostensibly in partnership with Griswold, then there would have been some slight reason, some shadow of pretext for imagining that it would have been to his advantage to silence his friend and prevent his own exposure. But that Warren, a business man, and not a bravo, would risk

the vast penalty accruing to the crime of murder for the sake of accomplishing such a result — a phase of civilisation by no means uncommon in New York commercial circles — was what Thornton Carey could not and would not believe. Still the mystery of Warren's being in London at the time when even those in his employ believed him to be in Chicago, and the fact of his having induced his brother to personate him in the latter place, in order to throw all inquiries off the scent, was so suspicious, that Carey deemed it right at once to make Bryan Duval acquainted with Mrs. Jenkins's story, and with the result of his deliberations thereon. So he came out of the shrubbery far less eager and impetuous than he had entered it, and walked down at a quiet pace to the Fifth-avenue Hotel.

On entering Mr. Duval's room, he found that gentleman lying at full length upon the sofa, wrapped in a gorgeous blue-silk dress-

ing-gown faced with red, and his feet encased in Turkish slippers. It was Mr. Duval's habit to indulge in an hour's siesta before going down to his theatrical duties, and Thornton Carey was afraid that he had interrupted the popular favourite while thus refreshing himself; but Mr. Duval, hearing the door open, raised his head, and seeing who was there, called to his friend to come in.

'Sit down,' he said, 'and smoke a quiet cigar. I was not asleep; I have been reading that diary of poor Mrs. Griswold's all day, and I had just laid it down and shut my eyes to reflect upon two or three points which struck me as curious. I find,' continued Mr. Duval, slightly stretching himself, 'that to close the eyes conduces very much to reflection, and is occasionally anything but disagreeable.'

'I have been engaged nearly all day in consideration of the same subject,' said Carey, 'and I came to see if you had a

few moments to devote to its discussion with me.'

'A few moments, my dear fellow!' said Bryan, raising himself up on his elbow to look at the clock, 'a couple of hours! The enlightened citizens of this great republic do not expect to see their cultivated entertainer before nearly eight o'clock—it is now little more than five—so that I shall have ample time to hear you talk, to interpose maybe a few humble suggestions, and to get down to the theatre with the greatest ease. Proceed now; I am all attention.'

Thus encouraged, Thornton Carey began the narration of the day's experiences. When he began to describe his arrival at Mrs. Griswold's, it was obvious to him that the great actor, notwithstanding his professions of interest, was scarcely so attentive, or indeed so wide awake, as he might have been; he kept up indeed a continuous refrain of 'Hum!' and 'Ah!' and 'Dear me!' but his eyes were closed, perhaps for the

advantage of deeper thinking, his lower jaw relapsed, and a soothing sound issued from his nose. When, however, Thornton came to relate the accident which had happened to the train, and the death of the supposed Trenton Warren, his companion roused in an instant. As he proceeded to describe the terror which had seized Mrs. Jenkins, the exclamation which she had uttered, and the fainting fit which had ensued, Bryan's interest grew more and more intense. He sat upright upon the sofa, leaning eagerly forward and drinking in every word; and at length, when Thornton Carey had come to the end of Mrs. Jenkins's confession, and had revealed the message which Helen had given him on the slip of paper, to the effect that Trenton Warren was the murderer of her husband, Bryan Duval brought his hand down heavily on the table, and cried in a hoarse voice, 'By God, she's right!'

'You think so?' said Thornton Carey. 'All the time the woman was speaking I was

haunted by an idea that such might be the case, and when I read Mrs. Griswold's avowal of her strong impression I was almost convinced; but I have been walking about in the Central Park ever since, arguing the question out with myself, and I am fain to confess that I am now strongly sceptical about it.'

'For what reason?' asked Duval.

'The absence of motive,' said Thornton Carey. 'Suppose Trenton Warren had taken advantage of the confidence reposed in him by Griswold, had used his knowledge of and power over their joint business affairs heavily to pillage his friend, he had opportunities during Griswold's absence of twisting accounts and destroying evidence, and would never have gone to the extent of murder for the sake of concealing his dishonesty.'

'You are right,' said Bryan Duval. 'From all I have heard of Mr. Warren, he would know far too much for that; but even he is human, I suppose, and I think I

can supply another motive by which most of us are liable to be actuated, and which in this instance, if I am right, has been all-powerful.'

'And what is that?' asked Carey.

'Combination of offended vanity and a desire for vengeance,' said Bryan. 'When you came in, I told you that during the day I had been engaged in reading Mrs. Griswold's journal, and that I had laid myself down on the sofa the better to reflect over certain passages which had struck me. This was the case just now, though you thought I was going to sleep. Up to the time of your arrival I had not discovered the meaning of those passages, but what you have said has given me the clue.'

'You think so?' asked Carey.

'I am sure of it,' said Bryan Duval. 'But you shall judge for yourself. I have read this diary through with the greatest attention, and have marked certain portions of it for reference. It seems that it was com-

menced at Alston Griswold's request; he intended that it should be a record of all the events of her daily life, and should be sent to him from time to time in lieu of ordinary letters. And that,' said Mr. Duval, looking up, 'shows what a strange fellow he was and what confidence he had in his wife. The idea of expecting any woman to tell you all that she has been doing, much more all that she has been thinking! Mrs. Griswold seems to have been a kind of pattern wife, for there is certainly no one else of my acquaintance whom I should have thought capable of strictly following such a behest.'

'Mrs. Griswold,' said Carey, 'would obey her husband to the letter.'

'Exactly,' said Duval. 'Now let us get back to the journal. You will observe in this first marked passage that her idea of writing a journal is that he may "follow her life from day to day, through all the familiar hours of it, so that he may cheat

himself out of the idea of separation," and a little farther on she writes: "So I begin it thus, in an irregular and unskilful fashion, no doubt, but with the utmost sincerity of intention to write in it everything which can interest him." I have read these passages to you to show how simple and single-minded the woman was when she commenced her task; how fully she intended that every thought of her heart, every prompting impulse should be laid bare to the loved one far away. I will read you farther passages now, which will show you how the idea had to be given up; how certain experiences in her life were written indeed, but not for submission to her husband's eye; and how the entries for his perusal are mere domestic details about the baby, the nurse, and the doctor, omitting any reference to the one great event in her life which had happened since her husband's departure.'

'Do you mean to say that this book

shows any duplicity of Mrs. Griswold's?' asked Carey earnestly.

'Not the least in the world,' said Bryan Duval. 'God forbid for an instant that I should be supposed to hint such a thing of so estimable a lady. It was out of love and regard for her husband that she had to keep back certain facts from his knowledge, as you shall now hear. My next quotation, as you will see, is taken later in the book.

"With all the relief which the absence of Alston's friend has given me, there is a great pang of pain for Alston himself, and a horrid sense of a barrier of concealment between us."

'She alludes here to Alston's friend. You see farther on she speaks more plainly:

"I have allowed so many days to elapse before I force myself into commencing this self-communing, in sheer uncertainty of what my line of duty is; and though I am

now tolerably clearly convinced that neither now nor ever must I reveal to Alston what has passed, the conviction invests my task of writing to him with great pain and difficulty. Somehow we seem to be doubly parted; first by distance, then by a secret. How shall I bear to see him take up his relations with Warren just where he dropped them, and to know, as I do know, how his confidence is betrayed?"

'There you see for the first time comes out the man! There is then a passage to say she does not think that Warren has been false to her husband in their business relations; but mark the next passage:

"It would do my husband such harm in every way to know what has occurred; his own frankness and loyalty of nature could hardly withstand so great a shock; the world would be changed for him. No, he shall never know it; I will trust to the chapter of accidents, or rather, I should say, to the beneficence of Providence, to

preserve us harmless from his false friend."'

'Good God!' cried Carey, starting up, 'this scoundrel must have made love to Helen! Is not that how you interpret it?'

'Exactly,' said Bryan Duval; 'and immediately after Griswold's departure; but he must have met his match in Mrs. Griswold. By the context, it would seem that she must have insisted upon his never setting foot in her house again, and that he thereupon agreed to go, as he told her, to Chicago, as this passage would seem to insinuate:

"How cleverly, how skilfully this man has carried out this sudden and complete change of all his plans; how reasonably he seems to have accounted for leaving New York; no one seems surprised, and I am quite certain not the slightest shade of suspicion that his departure is of any consequence to me has presented itself to the mind of any of our common acquaintance,

though the close tie between him and Alston is perfectly well known."'

'The existence of that tie between them would have called public attention to the fact that there was no intimacy between Warren and his partner's wife, no acquaintance even, it would be imagined, if he was forbidden calling at the house; and it was no doubt this that suggested to him the advisability of going to Chicago.'

'Probably,' said Duval. 'By the way, if we had had any doubt as to whether this ruffian had dared to pay his addresses to Mrs. Griswold, we should find it solved in this passage:

"I believe the love of a man like Warren is half passion, half hatred, and that the hatred swallows up the passion when it is effectually checked. Whence that notion has come to me I know not; but it has come, and with it a fear of this man's hatred, greater, if possible, than my horror of his love."'

'There is no doubt of it now,' said Thornton Carey, rising and pacing the room with set teeth and clenched hands, 'nor have I a doubt that he murdered poor Alston. He is doubly a villain, and I have a double motive for revenge.'

'What is to be done we will consult farther to-morrow morning,' said Duval. 'I must be off to the theatre now; but I entirely agree with all you say.'

At this moment a boy brought a note to Thornton Carey, which he opened and read.

'It is from Mrs. Griswold,' he said. 'That poor woman, the nurse, has been to the scene of the accident, and recognised the dead body, supposed to be that of Trenton Warren, as her husband.'

CHAPTER VI.

HARKING-BACK.

The evening papers had full details of the accident, which were eagerly discussed and speculated upon; Trenton Warren was a man of such mark in New York society, that the news of his death created more than an average amount of interest. Not that the news that he was dead was received without question; Warren was considered far too smart a man to allow himself to be gotten rid of in any unexpected manner; and while one set of his friends maintained that some swindler had endeavoured with dishonest intent to personate the great speculator, others averred that it was merely a case of accidental though extraordinary resemblance; while the third party, consisting of

those who had found themselves mixed up in opposition schemes, believed that Warren was really dead, and that Providence had thus rid them of a dangerous enemy.

The next morning, Bryan Duval, attired in the gorgeous dressing-gown, was sipping his coffee, when Thornton Carey, with somewhat of a worn look on his usually bright face, entered the room.

'You will think me an unconscionable bore,' he said, 'but I am so haunted by this painful subject that I can think of nothing else, and I have only you to turn to for assistance and advice.'

'My dear sir,' replied Bryan Duval, looking up at him from under his very effective eyebrows, 'you cannot do me a greater favour than to interest me in the great drama of life; a study which has for me the strongest and purest charm; a study the results of which I endeavour to make manifest in those works which the public on both sides of the Atlantic is pleased to approve of.

Have you any farther news—you look pale and anxious, my dear sir, as though you had been worried by some farther complication?'

'I have no farther news, and there are no farther complications that I know of,' replied Carey, 'and my paleness is probably occasioned by the fact of my having laid awake nearly all night thinking over those which already existed. That woman's confession yesterday, and the information which we received from the perusal of Mrs. Griswold's diary, prove to me incontestably that Helen is right in fixing the suspicion of her husband's murder on Warren by supplying the motive for his crime.'

'I am entirely of your opinion,' said Bryan. 'The scoundrel had made love to Mrs. Griswold, and, afraid that she would communicate his baseness to her husband on his return, made away with him; the incident is not at all unnatural, or rather I should say is perfectly dramatic. I have

used it more than once in the course of my career, and never knew it fail to bring down the house.'

'I guess we shall find that he was influenced by other motives as well,' said Carey. 'After I left you last night, I went carefully through a portion of Griswold's papers, and by what I could glean from them, I have little doubt that the poor fellow has been mercilessly robbed by his trusted friend. It would be most important if we could learn fuller particulars of Griswold's method of life while in England; you have furnished us with most valuable information, but of course yours was but a casual acquaintance with him. If we could only get at some of those who were there mixed up with him in his business transactions, it might materially assist us.'

'I have been thinking of that also,' said Bryan Duval, 'and it appears to me that our first step should be to try and find out what has become of a certain Mr. Dolby, an

American gentleman whom you may or may not have heard mentioned by Miss Montressor. He was in England immediately before the day of the murder, but I think spoke of returning to America very soon.'

'There would be no difficulty in ascertaining his whereabouts, I should imagine,' said Carey, 'from Miss Montressor herself.'

'Well,' said Bryan Duval, speaking slowly, 'that is a matter in which we must proceed with a good deal of delicacy. There were, I imagine, certain relations between Mr. Dolby and our dear friend Clara which you, in your virtuous and secluded life, my dear sir, probably know very little about, which nevertheless do exist in this wicked world, and, so far as my experience goes, have great weight in the conduct of its affairs. This being the case, in conversation with Miss Montressor we must handle the subject very gingerly; for Clara, though a flirt and a coquette, is thoroughly staunch

and loyal, and nothing could induce her to betray her friend.'

'To betray him?' said Carey.

'I use the word advisedly,' said Bryan. 'I have certain reasons in my own mind concerning Mr. Dolby, and if they are correct—However, we will go and see Miss Montressor, and you may leave the manipulation of the subject to me. You will at once see the key-note I strike, and then you can join in in the same strain.'

They found Miss Montressor in one of the drawing-rooms, and happily found her alone. She was standing at the window, looking down on the gay crowd thronging Union-square, and reflecting with much self-complacency that to most members of that crowd her name was known, and that to many she was an object of admiration. How lucky it was, she thought, that Bryan Duval's attention had been directed towards her, and that she had come out to America, instead of wearing away her life in the dull

level of London theatricals! Now the success which she had made in New York would be recognised in London (she had taken care to have all her best notices regularly inserted in the great London theatrical journal, the *Haresfoot*), and on her return she would take up an undeniably leading position, and defy all the intriguing efforts of Patty Calvert or Theresa Columbus for supremacy.

In the midst of this agreeable reverie she felt a light touch on her elbow, and on looking round she saw Thornton Carey and Bryan Duval close by her side.

'We want you to give us ten minutes' talk, my dear Clara,' said the latter, leading her to a chair, while he and his friend seated themselves close by her; 'we want a little information from you to assist us in getting up evidence in this police investigation, which, as you know, is now being made.'

'Still upon that dreadful subject,' said Miss Montressor with a sigh, but really de-

lighted to be made of some importance; she had been long enough with Bryan Duval to perceive the advantages of extensive advertisements, no matter in what way—'still upon that dreadful subject of poor Mr. Griswold's murder?'

'Still,' said Bryan. 'You see the poor fellow talked more freely with you than any one else, and as his life in England is a blank to the police, they want to hear as much about it as possible. It is very important that they should know with whom he associated while in London, and I want you to tell us whether he ever named to you any American friends whom he had ever met over there.'

'Never,' said Miss Montressor, 'save when talking about his wife and his home-life. He was what may be called a reserved man, and I never heard him mention the names of any friends either in America or England.'

'Of course,' said Bryan Duval, who had

been playing with his watch-chain, but as he put the question raised his keen eyes and looked her steadily in the face—'of course Griswold, or Foster as he called himself, was well acquainted with your friend Mr. Dolby?'

'O dear no,' said Miss Montressor promptly; 'Mr. Dolby particularly avoided him.'

'Avoided him!' cried Carey.

'Not merely that; but desired me never to mention his name to Mr. Foster, or indeed to any American. He said that his business interests required that his presence in England should not be known.'

The two men exchanged glances.

'It would be of the utmost service to us in this painful business,' said Bryan Duval to Miss Montressor, 'if we could be placed in communication with Mr. Dolby. Your own intelligence, which I have never hitherto known to be at fault, my dear Clara,' he

added gallantly, 'and which has come out very strong and clear indeed all through these investigations, will show you at once that we must not let any circumstance, however apparently trivial, slip, or any indication, however faint, escape us.'

Miss Montressor, whose ready appreciation of a compliment was not to be influenced by any external circumstances, however serious, replied at once that she thoroughly understood that point in the case, and assuming a becoming gravity of demeanour, offered herself for cross-examination concerning Mr. Dolby. She made, however, one mental reservation, on which she resolved she would act with unflinching determination; it was that she would not betray, in the course of that cross-examination, however tortuous and severe it might be, the secret of her former relations with Mr. Dolby. And as she made this mental reservation, Bryan Duval knew she was making it, and did *not* smile at her simpli-

city in supposing he was likely to put any question to her of the kind. For though Bryan Duval had no personal acquaintance with Mr. Dolby, he knew all about Miss Montressor, and could have astonished that lady not a little if he had thought proper to treat her to a biographical sketch of herself. The same thing might have been said of a good many persons in Miss Montressor's profession; they would have been considerably surprised if he had revealed to them his intimate acquaintance with their history.

Miss Montressor accordingly gave a somewhat garbled and embellished account of her relations with Mr. Dolby, and though Bryan could plainly see that Thornton Carey was more puzzled than enlightened by her story, and that he was very anxious to get her to be more explicit and direct, he checked him in every attempt to give expression to such puzzlement and anxiety by a series of looks which said, 'Leave her to

me, I know how to manage her,' much too plainly for contradiction. Bryan Duval had early in their acquaintance impressed Thornton, as he impressed everybody, with a sense of his great and versatile ability, but equally with a sense that he liked to do things exactly his own way, and had an unmistakable conviction that that way was the best. So when Miss Montressor rambled, and Bryan Duval merely beamed upon her, Carey submitted, and was presently rewarded by a peculiarly intelligent glance from the actor, who was playing so admirably the unaccustomed part of examining counsel, which unmistakably bespoke Carey's viligant attention, and indicated his own belief that a point was being made. And yet Miss Montressor had only said:

'I don't think Mr. Dolby was at all a sociable sort of person; he never seemed to care about going anywhere, and he had a most special dislike to being introduced to strangers.'

'And that was the reason why you never extended the advantage and pleasure of his acquaintance to me, eh, Clara?' asked Duval slyly; and it was at this point of the interrogatory that he gave to Thornton Carey the before-mentioned intelligent look. 'That was all right, of course, as he was such a morose fellow, and you could not help yourself—otherwise, your new friends ought to have been made known to your old.'

'Ah, but you weren't such an old friend then as you are now!' said Miss Montressor ingenuously; 'and I am quite sure he would have objected most strenuously to my having introduced him to you.'

'Indeed! and why? Why should the general taboo have been made particular in the case of your most devoted? Was Mr. Dolby of a jealous turn?'

'Nonsense!' said Miss Montressor, becoming very much confused on finding that she was entangling herself in her explanation. 'How can you ask such foolish ques-

tions? Of course not; but he had some strong objection to be acquainted with actors.'

'Not extending to actresses, eh?' said Duval, whose care it now was to get her to commit and confuse herself as much as possible.

'Don't be absurd, and do let me go on, if you want me to tell you anything. I was going to say he had some peculiar objection to be acquainted with actors, because he thought they would be injurious to the serious and solid business connection he wanted to form in London. He never told me what his business was, and I'm sure I never wanted to know. All business is a bore until it comes to spending the money, and I hate hearing about it; so I never bothered him on that score. He once told me that as Mr. Foster was also a man of business, he might be possibly mixed up with some transactions which would clash with his own.'

'Did he say that?' asked Thornton Carey eagerly.

'Certainly,' said Miss Montressor; 'I recollect the expression.'

'Now, Clara, pull your wits together, and answer this question clearly—Did Mr. Dolby ever allude in any way to Foster's wife?'

'Only in this way. At this same interview he asked me if Mr. Foster were married; and when I told him "yes," and that he was always raving about his wife, Dolby sneered, and said he hated men who aired their domestic affairs before the world.'

'Was that the last time you saw him?'

'The very last. He took the precaution of calling himself Dolby when he came to see me,' continued Miss Montressor, floundering more and more: of which fact Bryan Duval looked, this time, profoundly unconscious.

'The precaution!' he repeated; 'why the precaution? Was not Dolby his real name?'

'I really cannot tell you—I only know it was not the name he went by in society, at his lodgings and so forth, for there he was known as Mr. Dunn.'

'Did he tell you so?'

'Ye-yes, he did. I had occasion to write to him a few times, just a trifling note now and then, and he told me I must not address him as Mr. Dolby, but as Mr. Dunn.'

Duval and Carey exchanged glances, and now listened to and watched her with the deepest attention. This piece of information was of the utmost importance, as pointing to something at least equivocal in the character and position of the man who bore so strange a resemblance to that other man whose fate was interwoven with that of Helen Griswold's murdered husband.

'Did you not think that rather odd?'

'Well, no, I didn't. I suppose I am too much accustomed to people having more names than one to think it at all remarkable. But I quite understood him that he was

obliged to be very careful, because he was mixed up in business with a lot of puritans, who would be sure to think he was neglecting his work and going to the bad if they ever found out that he amused himself like other people. And that was one reason, I think, why he was so particularly anxious not to be brought in contact with Mr. Foster, because he would be sure to meet him under another name, and it would be suspicious and unpleasant.'

'You are quite clear that he was especially desirous that Mr. Foster should not know anything about him?'

'I am perfectly clear on that point;' and Miss Montressor's vivid memory recalled every particular of the last interview between herself and Mr. Dolby, shaking her head the while with an emphasis confirmatory of her words.

'That is an exceedingly important point,' said Bryan Duval, 'because you see, my dear Clara, it is plain that Mr. Dolby must

have known something previously concerning Mr. Foster and the nature and purport of his business in London, otherwise he would not have so regarded the probabilities of their meeting as to make it indispensable that he should keep out of his way when passing as Mr. Dolby; and it is just this presumable knowledge of poor Griswold's business that makes Mr. Dolby of so much importance to us in the unravelling of this story, since we cannot get hold of any one who really does know enough about it to be able to suggest a possible motive for his murder.'

'I quite understand all that,' replied Miss Montressor, 'and I have told you everything that can possibly throw any light upon it. Stay, there's just one thing more. I called at his lodgings in Queen-street, Mayfair, once—only once—it was after the last time I saw him, and I inquired for him by the name of Dunn; but he had left, and gone, the woman of the house

thought—believed, I ought to say—to America.'

'You and he had quarrelled, Clara, and you expected to find him there, you sly puss!'

'Perhaps so,' she answered, with a coquettish toss of her head; 'but he didn't show up, you see; and I know nothing more about him.'

'I hope you care as little as you know?'

'You may make your mind quite easy on that score. My heart is not fragile, and when it is broken, it will not be by Mr. Dolby.'

'That's right, Clara, or by "the likes of him," as we make the Irishry say in our Emerald Isle pieces. And now I'm sure you must be awfully tired of all this *interrogatoire*, in which you have acquitted yourself nobly, though your last little bit of information makes it plain that Mr. Dolby, or Mr. Dunn, came out to America before we came, and can therefore throw no light upon the murder of poor Griswold.'

'I don't see that,' said Thornton Carey; 'if we could find him here in New York, he could tell us what he knew of Griswold's secret business in London, and in *that* lies the germ of the murder.'

'You think so, do you, my young friend? But then you are young, and your knowledge of men and cities is a good deal limited.' This was Bryan Duval's mental comment on Thornton Carey's remarks. His spoken reply was more respectful, though vague. He merely said:

'Of course, of course. But we need not detain Miss Montressor any longer. You have some shopping to do, I know;' and he gallantly conducted the lady to the door, after she had taken leave of Thornton Carey in a most gracious and engaging manner. Then he returned to Thornton, his manner entirely changed, his face lighted with a glow of success, his eyes sparkling, and a hardly subdued excitement all over him.

'She has done it,' he said; 'she has unconsciously given us the clue. And now she must be put aside, clean out of the whole business.'

'What do you propose doing now?' asked Carey.

'I propose devoting a few hours to work,' said Bryan. 'I have a collaborateur whom I have kept waiting all the morning, and whose claims I can no longer put off.'

'I am exceedingly sorry that I should have detained you,' said Carey. 'Pray explain to the gentleman that the affair was of the utmost importance, or I would not have—'

'There is no gentleman to explain to,' interrupted Bryan, with a smile. 'My collaborateur is here,' he said, taking up a book of French plays which lay upon his table. 'Messrs. Scribe, Dumas, Macquet, and other French gentlemen, are good enough to work

with me. Some foolish people call it translation. I call it collaboration — a much prettier word, and one which better expresses the process. And what are you going to do?'

'I am going to see Mrs. Griswold.'

'Do you propose to tell her that the result of our inquiries so far is that she was right in the communication she made to you—that Warren murdered her husband?'

'I do,' said Carey. 'I do not see how it can be avoided.'

'Then I don't envy you your task,' said Bryan. 'You will have to tell her about our perusal of her journal, and our discovery that that scoundrel made love to her. You will have to give his dread of her informing her husband on his return as the motive for the murder.'

'I think I can save myself that pain and Mrs. Griswold that humiliation,' said Thornton Carey. 'I told you, I think, in the early part of our conversation that in

my search through Griswold's private papers I had lighted upon what I imagined to be traces of large defalcations on Warren's part. These will require farther investigation; but I am now in possession of the fact that Warren's pecuniary position was not what was always imagined, and that he was heavily indebted to his partner, no one else being cognisant of the fact. This will be sufficient explanation to Mrs. Griswold, though I have little doubt that amongst the reasons which impelled the wretch, the other motive was the strongest.'

'That certainly seems to afford a way of escape,' said Bryan, 'and I wish you well through your mission. Let us meet to-night or to-morrow.'

He then left the room, and Thornton Carey fell into a deep and serious fit of meditation, with the direct results of which, except in so far as Miss Montressor's share in this story is involved, we have no immediate concern.

Before they parted, Bryan Duval and Thornton Carey reduced Miss Montressor's statement to writing, and on the same evening Thornton took the document to Helen, and read it to her, confiding to her in detail the conclusions at which Bryan Duval and himself had arrived, and the plan of action which they had determined upon, subject, of course, to her approval and concurrence. Helen listened in the sad and heavy silence which had succeeded to her first vehement and agonising grief, and thoroughly approved of the project.

In the mean time Bryan Duval had had a brief talk with Miss Montressor at the theatre. She had had a reception of unabated warmth, and was in high good-humour, so that she took Bryan Duval's advice that she should not seek to see poor Mrs. Griswold again just at present, as her health and nerves were exceedingly shaken, and the most perfect quiet was indispensable to her, with entire equanimity. Miss

Montressor was quite sincere in her regard for Helen, and was truly sorry for her; but she was a little tired of the murder and the melancholy now that the excitement had worn off, and was not sorry to give herself up with a sanctioned engrossment to the glories of starhood.

The next day Thornton Carey had a second interview with Helen, and informed her that he had succeeded in finding a substitute to undertake his duties, and in obtaining leave of absence from his post. Helen's strength and courage were beginning to revive with the hope of the detection and punishment of the murderer of her husband. To that detection and the insurance of that punishment the friend of all her lifetime was about to devote himself. He left her presence for a long interview with Mrs. Jenkins, who had returned from the scene of the railway accident, bringing poor Eph's remains for burial at New York. She had suffered so much from the shock of the

calamity which had befallen her that she had been forced to wean the infant, and thus her formal nominal occupation in Helen's household had come to an end. But mistress and servant were bound together by a new tie, that of a common widowhood, and that tie would never be broken in this world.

When Miss Montressor returned from the theatre that night, she found a letter and an *écrin* awaiting her. The latter contained a very handsome bracelet of black enamel, with diamond stars and a monogram in the same precious gems; the former was a kind and grateful *mot d'adieu* from Mrs. Griswold, who was going away to the Springs, and deeply regretted that she was too ill to say good-bye in person. Miss Montressor was delighted with the bracelet; but she wondered what Mrs. Griswold would have thought had she known that she was carrying off her sister without letting her bid her good-bye. But she was of a philo-

sophical disposition, and just then pleased, amused, and popular; so that on the whole she regarded the circumstance as 'all for the best.'

CHAPTER VII.

MR. DUNN.

THE solemn but beautiful days of a fine English October, surely dreary nowhere except in London, but there preëminently so, were half through their number, when Mrs. Watts, the owner of a highly respectable lodging-house in Queen-street, Mayfair, received with surprise and gratitude the naturally unexpected application for apartments to let.

It was just the time of year when there was least going on, when people were quite decidedly 'out of town' whoever went out of town at all, and people who hurriedly came back had not yet made up their minds to do so.

Mrs. Watts had quite a superfluity of

rooms to let, though her drawing-rooms were taken for what she had hoped as a permanency. The disappointment of this expectation, however, did not enable her to hold out the hope to the new applicants that she should be able to afford them the accommodation of what Mrs. Watts quite sincerely believed to be an unparalleled drawing-room floor; she was only going to lose her lodger, she hadn't yet lost him; and the new applicants, who made their appearance under exceptionably respectable circumstances, with a large quantity of luggage, and in a handsome hired carriage, were obliged to content themselves with the dining-room, a large and commodious bedroom at the back of it, and a pleasant bedroom upstairs, at a considerable height, for the gentleman.

The applicants were a gentleman and a lady, brother and sister, as they hastened to explain; and Mrs. Watts was afterwards heard to remark, 'That never was she more

took by the looks of any one than by those of the gentleman. She had nothing to say against the lady either, who was very good-looking and quiet mannered, only she didn't seem quite so much of a lady as the gentleman seemed of a gentleman; and if there is anybody,' Mrs. Watts would add in conclusion, 'as can see far through a deal board, a lone woman as lets lodgings in Queen-street, Mayfair, is that person.'

The arrangements were quickly concluded, and it was understood that the new lodgers would come in that night; in fact, after a short parley, it was proposed that the lady should remain with Mrs. Watts then and there; while the gentleman went out to luncheon at a restaurant, and undertook not to return until everything was in order. This bargain concluded, the gentleman went his way; and the lady applied herself, with the hearty coöperation of Mrs. Watts and a prim housemaid, to the disposition and arrangement of the voluminous

luggage which had accompanied them, and which, considering the very quiet appearance of the lady, who was attired in deep mourning weeds, and had anything but a dressy appearance, might perhaps have been brought rather as a certificate of character, in the event of it being inconvenient to apply for recommendations, than as representing actual necessity.

Mrs. Watts was a very good-humoured woman, with a turn for sociability, and a decided taste for gossip, which just at this season of the year she found it particularly hard to indulge; for not only were her own rooms standing empty, but those of her neighbours; and her neighbours themselves were for the most part gone off on their annual jaunts; an indulgence which Mrs. Watts did not allow herself. She found the autumn particularly dull, and to the unexpected gratification of letting rooms and taking money for them at an unlikely period, when her neighbours were not let-

ting their rooms, and were spending the money they had accumulated during the summer, was added the prospect of some pleasant talk with her strange lodger, in whom she at once recognised a thoroughly approachable person.

Accordingly, when the luggage was disposed of, a friendly cup of tea, to be partaken of jointly in the dining-room, was gratefully accepted by Mrs. Watts; who shortly found herself in the high tide of talk respecting London, its goings-on, the advantages of the situation in any street in Mayfair, and the difficulties of lone women who let lodgings, with a person who frankly acknowledged herself totally unacquainted with the great metropolis.

'Your first visit, ma'am? Dear me,' said Mrs. Watts, 'how odd that seems, to be sure! But your brother's been here before, and knows the ways of town well?'

'Yes,' said the stranger, 'I believe my brother, Mr. Clarke, knows London very

well indeed; but I feel rather timid about it, and it has been a great anxiety with me as to where we should settle down for the six weeks of important business that he has to carry through. I don't want any gadding about or sight-seeing; I only want to feel sure of being in a respectable house, where I can go my own ways and carry on my own occupations just as if I was at home in my country village, though, of course, I shall not object to a peep at the gay streets sometimes.'

'You won't see much gaiety in the streets or anywhere else in October in London,' said Mrs. Watts; 'but if you like to be quiet and carry on just as if you were in your own home, you could not be better off. Then, as I say, for six weeks to come we've not a soul in the house but Mr. Dunn, even if he was to stay, which I fear there is no chance of, for he did tell me on Wednesday as he was going to America in earnest.'

'That's the gentleman in the drawing-

room, isn't it,' said the stranger, 'you are speaking of?'

Mrs. Watts assented. 'And a very nice gentleman he is. We like him very much, only we sometimes think he is rather odd; and I never saw a man in my life as could not bear to be asked the slightest question except Mr. Dunn. I do assure you he was quite angry with me for wanting to know, which I thought was reasonable, when the drawing-rooms was likely to be vacant; which I had to remind him that it was fair on my part, for if he didn't give me notice he would have to give me money. Well, do you know, he is that peculiar, that I think he would rather have had to pay up when the time came, than tell me out downright plain that he was going back to America in a fortnight.'

'Really,' said the stranger, 'he must be an odd sort of man. Has he been with you long?'

'A goodish while now. He came back

to us once after he had left us, and I am sure then he went with the intention of going to America, though he didn't say so; and something, I suppose, changed his mind at the last minute, for back he came with all his luggage and reëngaged his rooms, and here he's been quite quiet and contented ever since; never gives a bit of trouble nor has anybody in to give more. However, he's one of them lodgers, as I always say, as is too good to last, and vexed that he was when I had asked the question, he did tell me that he was really going this time.'

'Really going! I should think everybody "really" went when such a journey as America was in question.'

'Not him, though, mum. I shouldn't be a bit surprised if we saw him back again after he starts next time.'

'What aged man is he?' asked the stranger carelessly. 'I ask, you know, because it seems so odd that an old man should be so restless and not know his own mind.'

'O, he isn't old, bless you,' said Mrs. Watts; 'he isn't much above thirty, if he's that; a small, slight, wiry little man; leastways I call him little—I daresay you wouldn't—because all my brothers were so uncommon big; looks as if he could bear any amount of journeys to America or anywhere else, and think nothing at all about them, if he had the spirits.'

'Hasn't he spirits, then?'

'No, he's very dull at times. He used to be a good deal jollier when he first came, and he used to go to the theatre a good deal, and out to dinner—leastways he didn't dine at home; but he's dropped all that now, I suppose he hasn't any place to go to, and there are no theatres at this time of the year, at least not theatres for gentlefolk, you understand; there's places where they plays Shakespeare and that, which people like him would never think of looking at; and so he stays at home and mopes a good deal, I should think. At what hour

did you say you would dine every day, mum?'

The stranger named the hour, and then went on to say, 'Then there really is no one in the house but Mr. Dunn at present?'

'Not a soul!' was the decisive answer.

'I ask, you see, Mrs. Watts, because I have a great fancy for seeing after my brother's room myself. When it has been made up in the morning, I like to put his things tidy, lay out his dressing things and collect his letters, and all that sort of thing; and as he will be sleeping at the top of the house, and I at the bottom, I should have to go up and down stairs to get at his things, and I would rather know that I should not run the risk of meeting people about the house. If there was any such risk, I should get you to tell me when was the best time to make sure of their all being out.'

Again Mrs. Watts assured the stranger that she could run no possible risk of meet-

ing anybody who could alarm the shyest individual. She had already made her acquaintance of the housemaid; and unless she put herself personally in his way she was extremely unlikely to encounter Mr. Dunn, who hardly ever came down the lower flight of stairs except to leave his letters on the hall-table, just before post hour, after which he usually went out for a stroll, to return with exemplary punctuality at dinner-time.

The stranger thanked her for these assurances and for her general civility, and Mrs. Watts retired to the lower regions, to issue orders for the preparation of dinner for her new lodger in a satisfactory and confidence-inspiring style.

The arrival down-stairs and the stir in the house had apparently not disturbed the secluded tenant of the drawing-room floor. He had indeed thrown aside the window-blind and looked out for a moment, as the heavily-laden carriage rumbled up to the

door, but it was only because the habitual emptiness of the street had hardly been interrupted before that day. He saw a woman in deep widow's weeds step out of the carriage, attended by a slight, active-looking young man, and enter the house; then he let the blind fall, and returned to his occupation, and thought no more of the incident.

Mrs. Watts had some reason to be proud of her drawing-room floor. It consisted of two very well-proportioned apartments, and a smaller room, intended for the dignified purposes of a boudoir, but which, under the lodging-house régime, served as dressing and bath room. The sitting-room and bedroom were handsomely furnished, and presented an aspect of very decided comfort, though it was a London house in October; a cheerful wood fire, just enough to brighten the room without overheating it, burned in the bright steel grate; a handsome easy-chair stood near it, the castors

buried in the thick white sheep-skin rug; while a writing-table, laden with papers and the paraphernalia of a business man, was wheeled into a convenient position with regard to both fire and light.

Let us have a look at Mr. Dunn, Mrs. Watts's model lodger, as he paces the sitttting-room from end to end, absorbed in meditations, which, to judge by the abstraction of his countenance, have nothing whatever to do with the actual scene. Mrs. Watts's brothers must have indeed confused her notions of the stature of human beings out of Yorkshire, to which county she belonged, if she considered Mr. Dunn a little man. Other people would have pronounced him decidedly tall; his figure was slim but wiry built, about twenty-eight years of age, with long, thin, close-shaved face, small deeply-set eyes, and thin bloodless lips. He walked up and down with a slow measured pace, his arms folded tightly on his chest, and the fingers of each hand

gripping the coat-sleeves with a curious fixity of grasp, corresponding with his set teeth and intent frowning eyes. Occasionally in his walk he stopped at his writing-table, uncrossed his arms, took up a sheet of paper from the number which lay scattered on the blotting-book, read it, laid it down again, refolded his arms, and commenced his uneasy, ill-regulated perambulation.

If the reader, Asmodeus-like, had been permitted to glance over his shoulder while he read these pages, he would have perceived how far Mrs. Watts's estimate of the good-nature and affability of her gentleman-like and most desirable lodger was to be relied upon. When he had taken up the third, he glanced over it viciously, as though uncertain whether he had made the terms of it bitter and imperative enough.

With the matter of these documents we have, however, no immediate concern. He read and re-read them; and then, having

lighted the gas in his rooms, he sat down at the writing-table, collected the sheets, which, as they were written on very thin paper, he was enabled to fold into a small compass, and made a kind of précis of their contents in cipher in a memorandum-book, which he locked away in one of the drawers of the writing-table before he proceeded to place the address on the envelope into which he had carefully packed the written sheets. The envelope was of the buff colour and medium texture which we are accustomed to associate with letters of business from America; but contrary to usual custom, no part of the address was printed, nor was there any printing upon the impressed wafer.

His task completed, Mr. Dunn drew his chair closer to the fire and took up a book, but he seemed unable to occupy his attention with its contents, and after turning over a few pages in a desultory way, he flung it down and went into his bedroom,

from which he emerged in a quarter of an hour, dressed for walking. Once more he crossed the sitting-room, approached the fire, and leaning against the mantelpiece, hat in hand, muttered, 'I cannot account for it, I cannot account for the delay of those letters; it is either foul play or an accident. If it is foul play, he is the most ungrateful scoundrel unhanged; if it is an accident—ah, "if!" where am I?'

With these words, uttered half aloud, and which seemed to have in them some mysterious and weighty meaning, Mr. Dunn took up the letter which he had just addressed, and went slowly down-stairs, carrying it in his hand.

The business of putting out of sight the luggage appertaining to the new arrivals was not yet quite completed, and Mr. Dunn's eyes lighted upon a very shiny black-leather valise, which was resting on one end against the clock-case until such time as it should be convenient to have it carried up to the

new gentleman's room at the top of the house; for his appellation, Mr. Clarke, had not yet come pat to the tongues of Mrs. Watts and her domestics.

There was nothing remarkable about the valise, except its newness and its shininess, and painted in white upon the lid were the initials 'T. C.;' and as Mr. Dunn looked at it he thought idly, 'That hasn't seen much travel, anyhow.'

He laid his letter on the table in the hall, from which it would be duly conveyed to the post at five o'clock; and also observing carelessly that the door of the dining-room was ajar and that the gas was alight within, an appearance from which he arrived at the conclusion that the lady and gentleman whom he had seen getting out of the carriage had made it all right with Mrs. Watts, and were actually then in occupation, he opened the hall-door for himself, felt mechanically in his pocket to make sure that he had his latch-key, in case of a

late return, and went out into the soft chill October evening.

The dining-room in the house which Mr. Dunn had just quitted was looking as cheerful as a dining-room not used for any other purpose than that of eating in ever can look. Mr. Clarke's sister, who had informed Mrs. Watts that her own unassuming name was Jones, and who had not needed to inform her that she was a widow, the fact being made abundantly evident by her dress, had set to work with a quiet notability to arrange it comfortably, and was now seated by the fire with a piece of needlework in her hands, and looked as much at home as if she had lived there all her life.

There was only one sign of innovation, only one instance of discomfort to be observed about the room: the door was open, and suffered to remain so. Presently, Patty, the housemaid, came to speak to Mrs. Jones, and announced that they were about to take the gentleman's valise up-stairs. She also

asked should she shut the door, having found it open.

'No, thank you,' was Mrs. Jones's reply; 'the room is rather warm.'

'Very odd,' said Patty to herself, 'people are about doors. She likes it open; but the fuss as some of 'em make if one doesn't shut it every minute after the lock slips in one's hand, as would make one think one would die at a breath from a key-hole! She doesn't look a fanciful sort, nor a delicate sort neither, for that matter.'

Presently Mrs. Jones heard Patty's by no means fairy footfall redescending the lower flight of stairs, and she appeared at the dining-room door, and asked the girl with a kindly civility, which had already gone far to win her in several small matters since the arrival of the new lodger—an event not quite two hours old—whether she was going to the post shortly.

Patty replied by a glance at the hall table. 'O dear, yes, ma'am,' said she, 'I

have got to go. There is that Mr. Dunn passes the pillar two minutes after he goes out of the house, and would never have the thought to post his letters himself, and I am as busy as I can be.'

'Never mind, Patty,' replied Mrs. Jones gently, 'I have a letter or two to write; they will be done in a few minutes, and if you will tell me on which side I shall find the pillar-post, I will take them myself. I shall be glad of a breath of fresh air, and I want to buy a few trifles at that famous brush-shop round the corner. Mr. Clarke showed it to me this morning when we were coming up here.'

'O, thank you,' said Patty, 'there won't be any more except yours; for Mr. Dunn has gone out, as I said just now, and he won't be in till goodness knows when, so I know he's got no more to write.'

'Then I will just put it in my bag now,' said Mrs. Jones, opening a small leather reticule and placing the letter with osten-

tatious care in it, and she immediately reëntered the dining-room and took out her own writing materials.

Mrs. Jones did not, however, seem to be in any hurry to get on with her letters; she merely laid a half-written page of note-paper open on the blotting-book, dipped her pen in the ink, and sat down before the table, but made no attempt to write. In about five minutes she rang the bell, which was answered by Patty.

'I have been so stupid,' said Mrs. Jones, 'as to forget to buy some sealing-wax, and I particularly want to seal the letter I am writing; do you think your mistress can lend me a bit?'

'Certainly, madam,' said Patty, and ran away with alacrity to fetch the desired article, which she brought back.

'Stay a moment,' said Mrs. Jones, 'I shall have done with it presently, and I would rather return it to Mrs. Watts, if you please; I shall get some when I am

out.' She then proceeded to seal two directed envelopes, which she stamped and placed in a bag beside Mr. Dunn's letter.

Having thus elaborately established the fact that she had been writing letters and was about to post them, Mrs. Jones put on her bonnet and cloak and went out, having received accurate instructions from Patty as to where she could find the pillar-post, and how she was to turn in order to reach the brush-shop.

In about half an hour Mrs. Jones returned. In her hand was a small paper parcel, and on her arm hung the leather reticule, with the spring gaping open, so that as Patty opened the door to admit her she could see that the bag was empty. During the time that had elapsed between her coming in and the return of her brother, Mr. Clarke, Mrs. Jones made no attempt to occupy herself in any way whatever. She sat by the fire with an intent and brooding

face, while the cloth was laid for dinner and Patty was coming in and out of the room. She held a newspaper between her face and the light, and the girl concluded that Mrs. Jones was very tired, for she did not seem so friendly or inclined to talk as she had done in the beginning.

At six o'clock Mr. Clarke returned, and greeted his sister cheerfully, with an inquiry as to how she found the rooms, and whether she was getting things straight and comfortable. Mrs. Jones assured him that everything was all right, and told Patty that dinner might be sent up as soon as it was ready.

At length the two were alone, and then Mrs. Jenkins told Thornton Carey, with eager though subdued excitement, that she had secured possession of a priceless document, which had, she believed, placed their prey securely within their reach.

No time had been lost by Thornton

Carey in carrying out the resolution of noble and disinterested friendship at which he had arrived. The details of what he was to do on reaching England had been fixed between him and Bryan Duval and their professional advisers; in fact, it was most important so to fix them, it was indispensable that he should be guided to a certain extent by circumstances, and that he should act with such caution and circumspection as to avoid the danger of awakening any suspicion on the part of Warren at his presence in England.

When a full statement of the conclusion at which our friends had arrived had been laid before Helen Griswold, she was entirely overwhelmed by the conviction that they were right. That she had no power to contend with the active and operative part of their decision, that some one must undertake the unmasking of her deadly enemy, was clear to her; but that Thornton Carey should be the person to do it appeared a

curious complication of the difficulties and distress of her fate. To one man who had loved her, her love had brought death in its most horrible and appalling form—that of base, cruel, cowardly murder; to another man whom she had loved purely and nobly indeed, but with a sentiment which was a growing force according as every day, hour, made her more and more dependent upon him for support and counsel and encouragement, her love was about to bring trouble and danger.

That there could be danger in his pursuit of Warren, Thornton Carey utterly denied, but uselessly; nothing could remove from Helen's mind the conviction of the power as well as the villany of this man. The frightful skill, the deadly calculation, and the hideous success with which he had carried out his machinations against her husband, had impressed Helen with an almost preternatural dread of him.

It was not that she believed he would escape, it was not that she for a moment supposed Thornton Carey's designs would utterly fail or be frustrated; but that she had a rooted conviction that terrible and deadly danger would befall him in the carrying of them out. In the extreme weakness and nervous excitement and spirit-broken timidity of her grief she felt herself a doomed and a cursed person.

'I bring evil,' she said, lamenting freely and with all her full heart to her humble but true friend, between whom and herself there now existed the bond of a common grief, 'and now he will be involved in my doom!' But she made no remonstrance, she felt sure that so it must be.

Thornton Carey had left New York without any formal leave-taking with Helen, and it was only two days prior to his departure that Mrs. Jenkins announced her intention of accompanying him. The idea had occurred to her when Mrs. Griswold had first told

her that Thornton Carey was about to proceed to England on this mission of vengeance, in which she and Mrs. Jenkins were equally concerned, for had not the murderer of Alston Griswold been also the cause of Ephraim Jenkins's death?

The argument was not very sustainable, but it was very readily accepted by the two women who were suffering together. If Warren's conduct had not in reality caused his brother's death, his influence had at least caused him to die under circumstances to which his wife could never look back without horrible regret, and in her mind there was a little longing that the punishment of this man's crimes should come down upon him, and that she should have a share in the agency which should bring it about.

'Let me go with him,' she had said to Helen Griswold; 'I will travel with him as his sister, and if I cannot be of any use to him, I will at least be no drawback'

Helen had from the first encouraged the notion, simply from the sense that to avoid utter loneliness for Carey in his dismal task would be a comfort to her; but a few moments' reflection showed her the full value of the suggestion, which was received with applause and enthusiasm by Bryan Duval, to whom she at once confided it.

Thornton Carey had never seen Trenton Warren; he was therefore not in a position to identify him absolutely, how complete the chain of evidence might otherwise be. Trenton Warren was also totally unacquainted with the personal appearance of Thornton Carey, would not recognise him if he saw him, and therefore would associate no suspicion with him. Neither had Mrs. Jenkins seen her husband's brother, who was, it must be remembered, in total ignorance of her existence; but she had had so much evidence, so many proofs of the strong resemblance which existed between Ephraim Jenkins and Trenton War-

ren, proofs which had culminated in Miss Montressor's exclamation upon seeing him, that Mrs. Jenkins felt convinced she would be able to identify him for the information and satisfaction of Thornton Carey, who might otherwise be entirely thrown off the scent by a change of name. Supposing on his arrival in London he were to find out that Mr. Dolby had ceased to be Mr. Dolby, he would be perfectly helpless in the matter; but it was of no consequence to her by what name the murderer should be passing among the unconscious crowd; the man whose face and figure might be mistaken for those now mouldering in the grave, the face and figure of him who had been so dear to her with all his faults and shortcomings, could not escape her lynx-eyed recognition and her determined pursuit.

Thornton Carey and Mrs. Jenkins were not long in getting through the ceremonial

of dinner, after which, when their undisturbed solitude was assured, they opened the letter which Mr. Dunn had with unsuspecting reliance placed that day upon the table in the hall.

The object of Thornton Carey's absence during the afternoon had been to obtain an interview with some of the police authorities in London, to whom he had made certain statements, which had resulted in a close watch being set upon the movements of the occupant of Mrs. Watts's incomparable drawing-room floor.

It was not with any remarkable reluctance, or any sense that she was doing what, under other circumstances, would have been a felony, that Mrs. Jenkins had abstracted the letter upon which so much depended. In her eyes, everything that could be done for the furtherance of the project upon which she and her companion were bent would have been strictly allowable, if not praiseworthy. Thornton Carey's notions

were a good deal more formal; but he had secured himself against risk in this matter. The trap in which Mr. Dunn was to be caught when all their preparations were so complete that it was impossible he should set himself free from it by any exercise of teeth or claws, or their equivalent in human cunning—when he would walk into it was not even left to his discretion—we shall shortly see.

For a moment, when Mrs. Jenkins put the letter into his hand and drew her chair up to the table alongside of his, that they might peruse its contents together, Thornton Carey experienced a passing pang of pity for the villain who had wrought such wrongs and misery to others in order that he might involve himself in the deepest and most ignominious ruin. As he broke open the envelope, he said drearily: 'What a clever fool this man is; what invention and ingenuity he has displayed in putting the rope round his neck!' Then he took up the

sheets one by one as their writer had put them in, smoothed them out upon the blotting-pad as their writer had smoothed them out, and proceeded to read their contents aloud for his companion, who was soon sobbing bitterly, but in a guarded manner, over the terms of abuse and tyranny lavished upon him whom they were never to wound.

Mrs. Jenkins and Thornton Carey had met on that morning for the first time, after a short absence on Thornton's part, whose purport will shortly be explained; but they had known all about Mr. Dunn's residence at Mrs. Watts's before he had left her for Liverpool. Hitherto, not a hitch had come in their plan; they had carried out their programme from step to step with exact punctuality and with undeviating success; the finishing touch had been put to their projects in a respect which they had been obliged to leave to the mercy of chance. They had concluded to a nicety that Mr.

Dunn would be writing to Trenton Warren at Chicago, on this day preceding the departure of the American mail; but what they had not calculated upon was, that Mr. Dunn would entrust the posting of his letter to any other hands. An unexpected piece of conviction had therefore come into theirs, and Mrs. Jenkins, with unfeigned thankfulness, blessed Providence for the fortunate accident.

Thornton Carey hardly felt that he dared be so demonstrative; the subject presented itself in a more complex aspect to his mind than to that of his companion and coadjutor.

The sheets of paper were still lying upon the table, and Thornton Carey and Mrs. Jenkins were still discussing their contents and exulting in the acceleration of their projects rendered possible by this most fortunate turn of fate, when Mr. Dunn, returning to his lodging at an unusually early hour, let himself in with his latch-key,

and went softly up-stairs, remarking to himself as he did so, that 'They seem to be quiet people who have taken the dining-room floor.'

CHAPTER VIII.

IDENTIFIED.

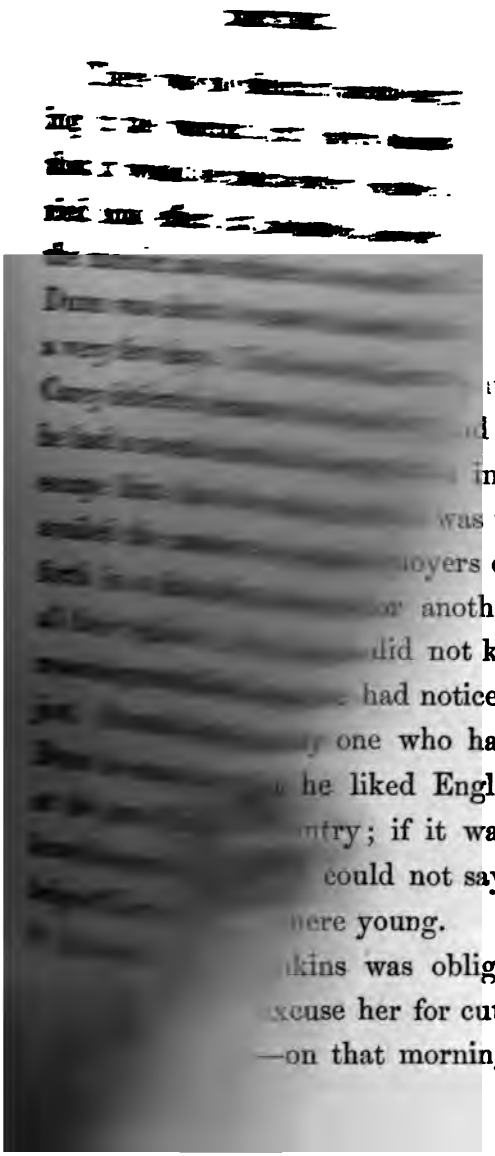
EARLY on the following day Thornton Carey paid another visit to the police authorities, with whom he had already been in communication. As much to their surprise as his own, and their mutual congratulation, he was enabled to lay the case before them with all the detail, explanation, and certainty acquired by the perusal of Mr. Dunn's letter. With the exception of certain inquiries which he had made during his brief absence at Liverpool and his interview with certain magnates of Scotland-yard on the previous day, Thornton Carey had, so far, worked up this case without professional assistance; but he now asked for such assistance in the practical form of a warrant for the arrest of Mr. Dunn.

There was no difficulty about the granting of the warrant, but Carey was advised that it would be much better to have it carried into effect at Liverpool, the scene of the murder, and whither it was evident Mr. Dunn was about to transfer himself within a very few days. To this advice Thornton Carey deferred perhaps a little unwillingly; he had a mortal dread that his prey might escape him, that the cunning which had availed the murderer so far might be put forth in a final effort, which would elude all their vigilance. But a little professional reasoning tranquillised his mind on this subject. It would be totally impossible for Mr. Dunn to escape the vigilance of the police at the port of Liverpool; and if he should leave his present lodgings without the knowledge of Thornton Carey and Mrs. Jenkins, the fault would be theirs. The gaoler of the prison to which he would be inevitably transferred before long would not have him in surer watch and ward than the quiet-look-

ing, business-like, and unsuspicious lady and gentleman occupying the dining-room floor. With this assurance, and instructions that he was to communicate with a certain person to whom he was introduced, and who was desired to hold himself at the applicant's disposal, Thornton Carey returned home just in time to see Mr. Dunn, in his usual neat attire and with his accustomed deliberation of step, turn into Piccadilly with the air of a gentleman who had nothing whatever on his mind but the procuring of air and exercise.

Two days, which both Thornton Carey and Mrs. Jenkins found exceedingly tedious and hard to dispose of, elapsed, and on the morning of the third, Mrs. Watts, who had made great friends with her lady lodger of the dining-room floor, came to inform her that she was really about to lose Mr. Dunn at last.

Yes, it was just like her luck. He was going for good, and the quietest and most



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ther was going out on business, and she must see him before he left the house. After he had gone she would return and resume their talk; so in the fewest possible words Thornton Carey was rapidly informed that the time had come. Mr. Dunn was going to Liverpool by the twelve-o'clock train.

Thornton Carey needed no details; he had merely to transmit that fact to the person with whom he had been put in communication on the previous day.

At noon that day the train for Liverpool started with its accustomed punctuality, and without the slightest indication that it conveyed any passenger more interesting or important than its ordinary freight.

Mr. Dunn occupied a corner-seat in a first-class carriage, and was profoundly unconscious of the presence in the next compartment of the remarkably quiet lady and gentleman who had been of late his fellow lodgers. He was looking ill and much pre-

occupied; he duly wrapped himself up, settled himself in his seat, and strewed the adjoining division with miscellaneous literature, but it lay there untouched, and Mr. Dunn's fidgetiness was such that it might not unreasonably have provoked the remonstrances of the stout elderly gentleman, with light fluffy whiskers and remarkably unexpressive eyes, who sat opposite to him, and read newspapers one after another, with engrossing interest and undeviating steadiness, for fully two-thirds of the journey.

But the stout gentleman took absolutely no notice whatever of his companion's movements, which alternated between excessive restlessness, in which he would throw off his wraps, pull the window up and down, and gape audibly, and extreme moody depression, in which he sat back, his chin dropped upon his breast, and his eyes fixed upon the flying landscape, and evidently totally unconscious of the objects passing before them.

It was remarkable that, though the train was rather crowded, Mr. Dunn and the elderly gentleman, with so insatiable an appetite for details, had this particular first-class compartment to themselves all the way, with the trifling exception hereafter to be noted. There might almost have been an understanding between the railway people and the elderly gentleman—perhaps there was, perhaps also he saw and remarked Mr. Dunn's moves more clearly than he appeared to see and remark them; for when Mr. Dunn (they were then three-quarters of an hour from Liverpool) took a crumpled packet of letters out of his pocket, though the elderly gentleman interposed a newspaper directly between his own face and that of Mr. Dunn's, he slid his hand gently into the pocket of his heavy overcoat, and at the same moment handled something metallic which lay within it.

Mr. Dunn pored over these letters with an absorbed attention, which could not have

been greater had he been in absolute solitude. He compared their dates, he counted them, he carefully rearranged them, each in its respective former position in the packet, and when he had read and re-read them, he tied them up again and replaced them in an inner pocket.

During all this time his companion kept his hand upon the something metallic in the pocket of his rough greatcoat, and when Mr. Dunn, apparently yielding to a momentary temptation to tear up the letters and strew them by the roadside, made a slight motion towards letting down the window next him, he almost instantly withdrew his hand, the barrier of the newspaper was withdrawn for a second, and the usually inexpressive face of the elderly gentleman was set in a very stern purpose indeed.

Nothing came, however, of the temptation. Mr. Dunn replaced the letters; his companion reinterposed the barrier; and the train glided smoothly on but another

quarter of an hour, during which Mr. Dunn subsided from his restless into his depressed alternative, and occasionally took out a photographic likeness of a woman, at which he gazed moodily.

Just as the train was running into Lime-street station its speed slackened, it stopped in an instant, and a man stepped with wonderful swiftness into the compartment hitherto occupied only by Mr. Dunn and the persistent reader.

Mr. Dunn slipped the photograph at which he was looking into his breast-pocket, and glanced round surprised, but the elderly gentleman, with a satisfied wink at the new arrival, stuffed his newspaper under the back of the cushion, and bending over and approaching Mr. Dunn, laid his hand on his shoulder.

Mr. Dunn started up, or rather attempted to do so, but found himself held firmly in his seat by a grasp apparently gentle, but wholly irresistible, while his companion in-

formed him, in the briefest of phrases, that he was arrested on the charge of murder, and had better not say anything lest it should be used to his disadvantage. Pale, speechless, and bewildered, the trapped criminal stared at the police-officer, who made a sign to his assistant, who, with business-like imperturbability and the deftness of long practice, slipped a pair of handcuffs on Mr. Dunn's wrists.

In another minute the train had stopped, and the police-officer, considerately arranging Mr. Dunn's wraps so as to disguise the fact that he was a prisoner, stepped out with his charge upon the platform, closely followed by his assistant.

Thornton Carey and Mrs. Jenkins retained their seats until the three, whose movements they were watching, had passed the door of the compartment in which they were. Then they immediately left the carriage and followed.

Among the persons assembled on the ar-

rival platform at Lime-street was a respectable-looking woman, who carried a large basket, with that air of inseparability habitual to females of her class. She was probably there by appointment with somebody, for she had taken her seat on a bench and waited with the inevitable basket on her knees for the arrival of the train.

As Mr. Dunn passed down the platform in the custody of his two travelling companions, the elderly gentleman slackened his pace for a moment when they came alongside the bench where this woman sat, and laid his hand, as if accidentally and in passing, upon the cover of her basket. She gave him a quick look; but on the prisoner she conferred a prolonged stare, of which, however, the wretched man was wholly unconscious. A few persons only came between Mr. Dunn and his companions and Thornton Carey and Mrs. Jenkins, who walked up to the woman arm-in-arm. Thornton Carey addressed her:

'Have you seen him?'

'I have, sir.'

'Is it he?'

'It is, sir; I could swear to the Methodist preacher that talked to the poor gentleman and to me in the Birkenhead ferry anywhere in the world!'

They took him to the police-office. He went quietly, in absolute silence, only looking from time to time at the men who walked one on each side of him with a confused and helpless stare.

Thornton Carey, Mrs. Jenkins, and the woman, whose evidence Thornton Carey had skilfully hunted up during his short stay in Liverpool, exercising the ingenuity which subsequently won him many warm congratulations from Mr. Dunn's travelling companion, and whose evidence was the last link in the chain of identification which convicted Mr. Dunn of the crime committed by

Trenton Warren, had reached the police-court some minutes in advance.

The prisoner recognised his inoffensive fellow lodgers of the dining-room floor in Queen-street, Mayfair, with an irrepressible start, and spoke for the first time. 'Who are they?' he asked.

Thornton Carey replied: 'I am Thornton Carey, whose benefactor Mr. Griswold was; and this woman,' drawing forward Mrs. Jenkins, 'is your brother's widow—your brother whose blood is on your head. We represent your victims!'

The usual formalities were quickly accomplished; and when the prisoner was searched, it appeared that he would have done wisely had he yielded to that momentary temptation which had moved him to tear the letters which he had read in the train and to scatter them in fragments from the carriage window; for the letters in question were those written by Helen Griswold

to her husband, and the photograph was that which the murdered man had carried in his pocket-book, and the murderer had robbed him of both.

'On the whole,' as Mr. Dunn's travelling companion remarked to Thornton Carey, as they walked away from the police-court together, 'it isn't often one has the handling of a case that fits together so satisfactorily; in this there isn't a loop-hole.'

EPILOGUE.

DURING the weeks, now numbering months, of their intimate association, a strong mutual regard had sprung up between Thornton Carey and Mrs. Jenkins. The bereaved woman's character had a great attraction for Thornton, who thoroughly appreciated her sincerity, disinterestedness, and depth of feeling. The earnestness and vehemence of Mrs. Jenkins's grief for the loss of a husband who perhaps had not precisely merited her love or her sorrow had struck the young man by its pure womanliness, and her sound practical common sense had been of immense assistance to him in every detail of his task. Thus the relation between the two confederates, which, owing to the discrepancy be-

tween their respective social stations, might have been attended by a certain awkwardness and reserve, had, on the contrary, been frank and pleasant from the first, and had very soon merged into genuine unreserved confidence and intimacy.

Thornton Carey, though perhaps more deeply a student of books, was also an observer of human nature, and in his long talks with Mrs. Jenkins, when it was a relief for them both to escape from the great purpose and topic of their lives into byways of conversation, would question Mrs. Jenkins concerning her own history, and the scenes she had witnessed, the experiences she had undergone as the wife of a man whose life had been so shifting and shifty, so disreputable and sometimes hard, in that wonderful microcosm, the city of New York.

Mrs. Jenkins had no reserve with Thornton Carey, towards whom she gradually assumed quite a motherly tone, and

she answered his questions readily, and drew for him the kind of pictures which he wished to see with his mind's eye with an untutored reality and a quaint force that he found most interesting. But on no topic was it so pleasant to him to hear Mrs. Jenkins discourse as on that of Helen Griswold, and on none was she more disposed to gratify him to the full. There was a deep vein of enthusiasm in Mrs. Jenkins, and the gentle, gracious, thorough lady into whose house she had gone with her heart bleeding its two sorest wounds—the death of her child and parting with her husband—had roused it. And then had come the remarkable combination of circumstances which had bound her life up in the same chapter of accidents with Mrs. Griswold's.

She would tell Thornton Carey over and over again innumerable small particulars of her first days in Helen's house, of her first impressions, and of the generous kindliness with which Helen had turned her first feel-

ing of loneliness and dependence into one which she had never thought to experience again—the tranquil happiness of home. She would tell of Helen's quiet regret for her husband's absence, of her rational life, her charities, her unselfishness, her love and pride for the child, until any listener less deeply interested than Thornton must have wearied of the subject. But he never wearied of it, and in return he would tell Mrs. Jenkins tales of Helen's childhood and his own, reproducing the old familiar scenes with a skill and vividness at which the simple woman, who, though uneducated, had the intuitive perception of good taste, wondered. Listening to Thornton's talk, she thought, was like reading a pleasant book, or looking at pictures. And so it came to Mrs. Jenkins's mind one day, that ever since that childish time, which had passed so happily amid the rural scenes and surroundings of Holland Mills, Thornton Carey had had but one love in his life—the

love of Helen—and that it had grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength. When this belief took possession of her, she went to work in her own clever yet simple way to verify it, by asking him in her turn about his life since the breaking up of the old childish associations, about his friends and his pursuits, and through all the narrative which she thus elicited she could trace no other influence than that of Helen. He had lived the life of a recluse and a student, not gloomy or morose indeed, but sufficing to himself, and desiring nothing beyond, in all the hours that were outside his work. He spoke of some men-friends, and they were chiefly men older than himself, but no woman's name ever turned up in his account of his life. When he mentioned Mr. Griswold, it was always vaguely, though with gratitude, but it was evident he had not known very much of him; and the awful termination of his life, the wonderful train of circumstances which

had turned the *protégé* into the avenger, made it difficult for Thornton to speak of him so freely as of other subjects.

Long before their task was accomplished Mrs. Jenkins believed herself to be in possession of the secret history of two hearts, with this great difference between them—that Thornton Carey knew and acknowledged to himself that he loved Helen Griswold, that he had loved her, and no other, all his life, but that Helen entertained no suspicion either of his feelings or her own. Mrs. Jenkins could not have analysed her conviction that Helen, excellent and devoted wife that she was, and true as was the affection with which she regarded her husband, had not been *in love* with him, but it was clear and strong, the growth of constant observation of innumerable trifles, those small but significant symptoms which only a woman notices and interprets aright. Then Mrs. Jenkins, who, for all her inferiority to Helen in the social scale, had some

strong points of resemblance to her, and was an instance of the absolute level on which classes stand when the only ruling feeling of the human heart is in question, asked herself whether it was that Helen had never been in love with any one, or whether it was that she was in love with some one else. The latter question did not present itself for a moment to the mind of Mrs. Jenkins in a light unfavourable or derogatory to Helen; she knew that, if such were indeed the case, Helen was entirely guiltless. Now the whole story made itself clear to the perception of Mrs. Jenkins, and she knew that the unconscious presence of an influence which had existed since her childhood, and been stronger than any which had since come into her life, had closed Helen's heart against every whisper of passion for the man she had married and, in one sense, loved.

With this discovery there had come to Mrs. Jenkins a still deeper pity and regard

for the young widow, so awfully bereaved, for there had come a clearer comprehension of how admirably she had fulfilled her duty as a wife. Thus it happened that the secret of both these hearts, which had never been mutually disclosed, had been revealed unconsciously by each to this humble friend; and in all the talks which they had together, Mrs. Jenkins had had floating before her fancy a vision of the future, in which the beautiful old story of the childhood of these two should be taken up again and brought to its perfection after such a trial as happily comes but rarely into human lives. She was far too discreet to breathe a hint of her discovery or her hope to Thornton Carey; and she promised herself that she would exercise an equal discretion when she should have returned to New York, and resumed her position in Mrs. Griswold's house.

It had been agreed that Mrs. Jenkins was to return before she and Thornton Carey started on their journey to England.

She had no friends in England that her friends in America knew of, and she felt in her inmost heart that the relations between herself and her sister would not be sufficiently satisfactory to compensate for an entire separation from Helen and her child. Besides, there was a very good chance that she night see as much of her sister by residing in New York as she should see of her if she lived in London; for Miss Montressor's success was so marked, that there was a brisk competition among American managers for the promise of her services during a long series of seasons. On the whole New York had become much more like home to Mrs. Jenkins than England was, though she felt that it would be long before the word would seem to have any meaning for her in a world where her Ephraim was not. With Helen Griswold she would have peace, respectability, and a strong interest in her surroundings; while to Helen, her presence must always be beneficial, to an extent

which would far out-measure the pain of their respective and common associations.

When the task which they had come to fulfil was finished; when the sentence of a righteous doom had been passed upon one of the most cruel and treacherous murderers who had ever incurred the curse pronounced against the shedder of man's blood; and the time fixed for Mrs. Jenkins's departure drew near (she wished to leave England before the execution of Trenton Warren), she discovered that Thornton Carey was hesitating about his own return to America. It had never been intended that he should accompany her; he meant to be in Liverpool when the dread penalty of his crime should be inflicted on Helen's enemy; but she had taken it for granted he would not make much further delay, and was quite unprepared for the announcement which he made to her the day before the sailing of the mail steamer in which a passage had been taken for her. He came round to see her at the Railway Hotel

(he was at the Adelphi) late in the evening, and after talking cheerily to her about the voyage back, he said:

'I hope you will drop talking of all this awful affair to poor Mrs. Griswold as soon as you can reasonably persuade her to let it rest. It is quite useless to keep up the misery and excitement of it any longer than they must necessarily last; and that will be over when this wretched man shall have been sent to his account. Then she had better be led to dwell on the happier features of the past, and to let its miserable ending die down into oblivion. You will be the best person to lead her mind into that channel, and I, and all her friends, will trust you to do it.'

'But, Mr. Carey, you will have a great deal more influence than I shall. Of course, I must let her talk at first as much as she likes; but if she will be kept from dwelling on the past by what I can do, she will look more to you than to any of her friends for

such things as can cheer her up, and do her real good.'

Thornton Carey smiled rather sadly.

'She will not have me to cheer her up for many a long day,' he said.

'Why, whatever do you mean?' asked Mrs. Jenkins in unfeigned amazement; 'ain't you coming very soon—as soon as—'

Her face fell, and she turned her eyes away. The subject was a terrible one, and they had avoided reference to it by common consent.

'No, my dear friend, I am not. I have been thinking it all over since I have been here, and I have come to the conclusion that I had better not go back just yet. I have made some friends here quite unexpectedly. Mr. Whitbread, the magistrate's brother, among others, has been kind enough to form a good opinion of me, and he has just been returned for B—. I dined with him last evening, and he talked to me a good deal about myself; asked about my

post at New Orleans, whether it was a permanent one, and so on. I told him exactly how the matter stood, and that poor Mr. Griswold had been negotiating a better post for me, but one which would not be likely to be vacant for at least twelve months from the present time. Then Mr. Whitbread offered to engage me as his private secretary for that time certain. He represents an important constituency, and will be a very active member of the House of Commons. He is an advanced Liberal, and there would be no better opportunity for me to learn the routine of public business than in his employment. So I have accepted the offer, and I shall be in England at least one year.'

'I do not regret it, sir, for your sake,' replied Mrs. Jenkins, 'though I doubt it will come very hard on Mrs. Griswold. But, then, she is one who does not think of herself, and if it's good for you, she will be content.'

Thornton Carey looked at her inquiringly, and a sudden deep flush suffused his face. Mrs. Jenkins saw the sudden flush, and perfectly understood its origin, but she made no sign, and continued:

'Have you written to her, Mr. Carey, or am I to take her the news? It will be a surprise to Mr. Duval, too, though he will be very glad to find you here when he comes back. Very likely he'll be writing a play about it, and be glad of your help.'

'Writing a play, you dear droll woman, half a century behind the speed of the age! I would lay a stout wager the play is ready for rehearsal!'

Once more the scene of this story is by the seaboard. The mail steamer for New York is just about to sail, and the landing-stage is as usual crowded by sightseers anxious to witness its departure. It is a fine, cold, wintry day, and the sky is bright, the wind fair. Unrecognised, unnoticed by the

crowd, who have no notion that the woman in widow's weeds, and the handsome young man who takes her on board the tender so carefully, were directly concerned in the great criminal trial which has been the central object of interest in Liverpool, Mrs. Jenkins and Thornton Carey pass the last few minutes of their companionship together.

Mrs. Jenkins is quite composed when she goes on board the Cuba, but she has been crying a good deal in the early hours of morning. She feels, now that the parting has come, how much Thornton Carey has cheered up and helped her through the anguish of her own bereavement; and now that all the excitement is over, her womanly heart has a touch of pity in it for the doomed wretch they have so effectually punished. But that is a weakness which she dares not betray to Thornton Carey, and which indeed she very soon gets over.

Thornton has seen to all the comforts

of her state room—for Mrs. Jenkins is travelling 'like a lady,' and is not in the least likely to disgrace the character, as she is reticent and unassuming always—and has added to them many a little 'surprise,' which will bring tears of gladness to her eyes when she shall find them out; and they are now standing side by side in the saloon, waiting, with the dreary mingling of dread and impatience which characterises all scenes of parting, for the signal 'for shore.'

'What shall I say for you to Mrs. Griswold?' she asks, with her hand in his.

'What shall you say? Have I not given you a thousand messages to Mrs. Griswold?'

'You have,' she answered, and yet she looked at him with such a look as might have shone in his mother's eyes, 'and I will not ask you for another. But I will say this to you as my parting words—and you must forgive me, Mr. Carey, and think me

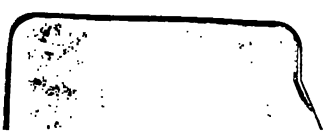
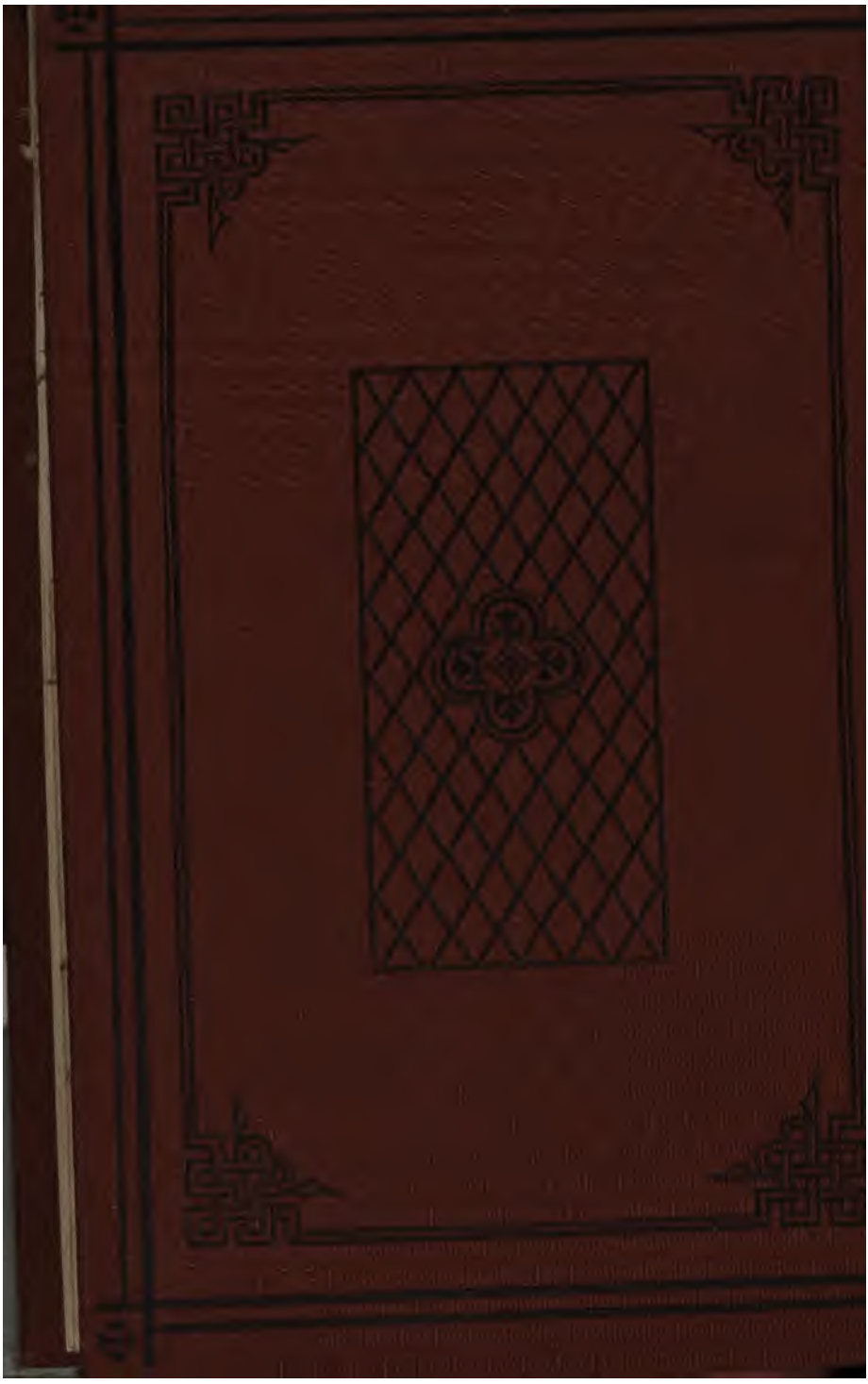
not too bold—see your year out in England, and then come home *for your reward!*'

She pressed his hand, close, close, and clung to him, as a mother might cling to a son, for a minute or two, and he spoke no word, but stooped over her, and kissed her on the forehead; and then the signal was given 'for shore,' and they parted.

A Note by the Author.

The story which I have here narrated is not original. I hasten to avow it, lest I should be detected, and obliged to confess the fact. It is one of those truths which look like fiction, only because they are so truly true. I am indebted for the 'heads' from which I have constructed it to Thornton S. Carey, the well-known merchant and *millionnaire* of New York, U.S.A., whose acquaintance, together with his charming

wife, formerly Mrs. Helen Griswold, and his if possible more charming stepdaughter, I had the privilege of forming, last fall, at Saratoga Springs.

THE END.

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